BASIL OF CAESAREA AND THE BIBLE

by

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PREFACE

This is a study of the man and the Book.

The present dissertation had its inception in an effort to cover some of the writings of Basil of Caesarea for the International Critical Apparatus Project of the New Testament. It is thanks to Professor Cyril C. Richardson of Union Theological Seminary (New York) that my thought was originally turned in this general direction, while for the specific choice of Basil I am indebted to Professor Paul Schubert of The Divinity School of Yale University, chairman of the Committee on Patristic Quotations of the American section of the project. As my study progressed it became apparent that insufficient critical work had been done on the text of Basil to make its analysis from the biblical-text standpoint feasible. At the same time it developed that there was ample room for an investigation of the general field of Basil's relation to the Bible, and to this the present dissertation is devoted. The only considerable study which this broader subject has received otherwise was done over three-quarters of a century ago by Hugo Weiss as part of a slight 109-page monograph on Die grossen Kappadocier Basilius, Gregor von Nazianz und Gregor von Nyssa als Exegeten.

Basil's Hexaemeron, his Book on the Holy Spirit, and his Letters were translated into English as long ago as 1895 by Blomfield Jackson in Schaff and Wace's "A Select Library of Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers," Vol. VIII: this is abbreviated "NpNF" herein. The Ascetica was translated by W. K. L. Clarke in 1925. Both are on the whole satisfactory translations and have

been largely though not blindly followed in the present study. In getting at the real heart of what Basil has to say inestimable aid has been received from the Reverend Theodore P. Theodorides, scholarly assistant to the dean of the Hellenic Cathedral of the Holy Trinity in New York City. Principal use was made of the libraries of Columbia University and Union Theological Seminary. In addition, the catalogues of the following were checked for material: the New York Public Library, the Library of Congress, the libraries of Yale University and its Divinity School, Fordham University, General Theological Seminary, Drew Theological Seminary, and the Catholic University of America. Aid was received from Andover-Harvard Theological Library and the British Museum. The conduct of the investigation involved some little communication with the European Basilian scholars dom David Amand de Mendieta, dom J. Gribomont, and M. le Chanoine Yves Courtonne. Dr. Johannes Quasten of the Catholic University of America was personally consulted once during the progress of the work. Professor Bruce M. Metzger of Princeton Theological Seminary was kind enough to read the dissertation and offer critical suggestions.

References to the writings of Basil in the dissertation are given in accordance with the following sample: Adv. Eun. II:20/256A. The Roman numeral refers to the book, letter, homily, or chapter, the figure after the colon to the paragraph; the number-and-letter designation following the slanting line denotes the page and sub-page of the proper volume of the Benedictine edition, which is the vulgate. The miscellaneous or general homilies of Garnier's Vol. II are often indicated by number alone: thus Hom. VII = the Homilia pros tous ploutountas. In addition to the "NpNF" already referred to, a few standard abbreviations are employed occasion-

ally, such as:

P.G.	Migne's Patrologia, Greek series
AV	Authorized Version
RSV	Revised Standard Version
TR	Textus receptus
MT	Massoretic text
ICC	International Critical Commentary
BDB	Brown, Driver, and Brigg's Hebrew Lexicon
JTS	Journal of Theological Studies
RB	Revue bénédictine
ZKG	Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte

The 1839 reprint of Garnier-Maran was the text employed in the main for the present work. In accuracy, layout, and general convenience this edition quite surpasses its exemplar and, on the whole, Migne as well. The LXX text followed is that of Swete.

To each of the members of my dissertation advisory committee, which included Professor Frederick C. Grant as chairman and Professor George Florovsky in addition to Professors Richardson and Schubert, I wish to emphasize my lasting appreciation for their counsel and consideration. In what follows I have earnestly tried to merit the confidence they have placed in me.

William A. Tieck

St. Stephen's Methodist Church parsonage
Marble Hill, New York City
March 2, 1953

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Chapter I

THE "DOUBLE EDUCATION" OF BASIL

THE COUNCIL OF NICEA in 325 proved to be an uneasy truce. What was intended to be a definitive statement only served to raise the discussion of the primary issue involved--the homoousion--to a new pitch of fury and frenzy in the decades which followed. Nor was the Nicene formula complete, a fact which was apparent as the discussion of the Holy Spirit and of the Trinitarian concept mounted. It was this twofold turmoil which was to agitate Christendom, especially in the East, until the Council of Constantinople in 381. No man better epitomizes the slashing currents and controversies of this strife-ridden half-century than Basil of Caesarea. Born four or five years after the first of these assemblies, he lived until almost the eve of the second. He inherited from the earlier a tempest of theological problems; he had a large if not the principal share in bequeathing to the later the solutions which were to give orthodoxy an epoch-making victory. "Placing Greek dialectic and science at the service of Christian beliefs, he made his contribution to this great work of the fixation of dogma, explicating the symbol of Nicea and preparing that of Constantinople."[1] The period of his episcopate is in fact midway of what has been called the golden age of Greek patristic literature, that age which extended from about the Peace of Constantine in 313 until near the end of the

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[1]Eugène Fialon, Étude littéraire sur saint Basile (Paris: A. Durand, 1861), p. 160.

fifth century. "The second half of the fourth century is the most brilliant period in the theological literature of the Greek Church," says Adeney,[1] and no name in this epoch shines with more luster than that of Basil. He stands next to Athanasius both in time and stature as the great champion of Nicene orthodoxy in its life-and-death struggle with Arianism. An aristocrat by birth and bearing, he could be haughty and imperious but was essentially humble and a man of the people: he cleansed the leper "not by a word but in deed." The "blemishes of temper and of pride" and the "certain hardness and want of sympathy" with which he has been charged must be considered against the background of the chronic liver ailment which plagued him. Wracked with this depressing illness and weakened by ascetic austerities, he yet withstood princes and potentates by the sheer force of his magnificent strength of character and luminous sanctity. He suffered so increasingly that in later life he was reduced almost to his pallet, yet his bosom friend Gregory of Nazianzus could say that "what he did with one hand was worth more than what another man did with the labor of both." His indomitable spirit and sense of mission shine through the following words:

> Sad and painful are [foes and calumniators] to them that seek for peace, but great are the rewards of patience for sufferings endured for the sake of the faith. So besides these let sword flash, let axe be whetted, let fire burn fiercer than that of Babylon, let every instrument of torture be set in motion against me. To me nothing is more fearful than failure to fear the threats which the Lord has directed against them that blaspheme the Spirit.[2]

"Our own security must not be regarded by us before the truth," he said,[3] and he lived by that maxim. Versatile and many-sided, he left the stamp of

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[1] Walter F. Adeney, The Greek and Eastern Churches ("International Theological Library"; New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1908), p. 71.

[2] De Spiritu Sancto, XXX:75/63E. [3] Ibid., XXI:52/44A.

a singularly creative mind on almost everything he touched. The outstanding instance of this is seen in the fact that throughout the East today Christian monasticism is almost everywhere what Basil made it. To an unusual degree he combined practical talents with great qualities of mind and spirit, and the celebrated Basileiad or hospital and benevolent foundation which he established at Caesarea became a model for similar enterprises.[1] It is for no idle reason that in the Orthodox Church Basil is reverenced as the first of the "great ecumenical teachers." Today no less than in Rufinus' time he is deservedly "a man of great fame for his faith and works and every kind of sanctity."

Basil's Unusual Background. Basil[2] was one of those favored individuals who enjoyed a heritage of a distinctly privileged kind. He was in fact both high born and well bred, the issue of choice heredity and exceptional environment. It would not be amiss to call him the distinguished son of a distinguished family. The savor of aristocracy, of wealth and po-

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[1] It evidently adjoined the magnificent church (Ep. XCIV) and the cenobium which Basil also built, and was so extensive that Gregory of Nazianzus refers to it as the "new city" (Orat. XLIII:63). (Cf. Morison, p. 128, n. 2.)

[2] The substance of the ensuing biographical account is found principally in the funeral oration by Gregory of Nazianzus eulogizing Basil (Oratio XLIII/P.G.XXXVI:493-606) and in Basil's letters, and partly in the life of Macrina by Gregory of Nyssa (P.G. XLVI:959-1000); on the Nyssenian's encomium of his brother (P.G. XLVI:787-818) vide infra p. 20, n. 2. The essential points in the biography of Basil are well established, but not the details. The full and animated sweep of his life has not yet been the object of a comprehensive modern, critical study. The apologetic tendency and the propensity to panegyric spoil the otherwise conscientious works of Tillemont (1714), Maran (1730), and, in our day, Allard. Venables' article in DCB and Fialon's study have merit, while Clarke's St Basil the Great: A Study in Monasticism affords introductory help. Giet's Sasimes ... has valuable chapters on the Athenian and monastic periods and on Basil's election to the episcopacy. Biographical studies by G. Hermant (1673), Cardinal Newman, (K. R. Wilhelm?) Klose, and J. Wittig may be mentioned. Vide also Socrates, Sozomen, and Rufinus.

sition, attaches to his mother's as well as his father's side, each having been propertied and having furnished a long line of officials to the army and the state. Basil's spiritual descent was even more illustrious. His grandparents on both sides suffered during the Maximinian persecutions. Abandoning their extensive property to confiscation, his father's parents fled to the mountainous woods in the province of Pontus, where they endured some seven years of exile and hardship, living by hunting.[1] Basil's maternal grandfather sacrificed not only his property but life itself for the faith.[2] The gifted and saintly paternal grandmother, Macrina, was a disciple of the celebrated Gregory Thaumaturgus--the "Wonder-worker" who was bishop of Pontic Neo-Caesarea and ardent disciple of Origen. Her son, the Basil who was in turn to give his name to his eldest son, was a man of renown alike in his profession and in his discipleship. His erudition and eloquence brought him wide recognition as a lawyer and great distinction as a teacher of rhetoric, while Gregory Nazianzus speaks of him as one who was regarded by the whole of Pontus as "its common instructor of virtue."[3] The elder Basil's marriage to the pious Emmelia, a well-to-do orphan who was the personification of the gracious name she bore, united him with a woman whose nobility of character and fervent Christian discipleship were equally conspicuous. The Nazianzan relates that the couple were especially re-

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[1] This must have been a particularly galling experience for a family of such nobility and prestige, "accustomed," as Gregory of Nazianzus tells us they were, "to the attendance and honor of a numerous retinue" (Orat. XLIII:3).

[2] Most or all of the property on both sides seems to have reverted to its rightful owners under better times and Christian emperors. Basil's brother Gregory speaks of the family holdings as being spread over three provinces (Pontus, Cappadocia, and, it seems, Lesser Armenia).

[3] Basil père must also have possessed the keen business sense of the landed gentry: his son Gregory characterizes him as "a shrewd man with a reputation for forming right decisions" (Life of St. Macrina, P.G. XLVI:964B).

nowned for their liberal charities, a fixed portion of the patrimony being dedicated by them to God. In short, it was not fortuitously that the children of this "community of virtue" came by the unusual gifts of nature and of grace which they manifested.[1]

Basil the younger was one of ten children, of whom five sisters and four brothers survived. The eldest child, a daughter, was named Macrina after her paternal grandmother. While the other four daughters married well, Macrina was turned to the ascetic life by the death of her affianced husband when she was about twelve years old. Her work in organizing the ascetic life for women has something of the stature of that achieved by Basil for male monasticism, and she became one of the notable saints of the early church. She exercised an especially deep and lasting influence upon her family in general and upon Basil in particular. The second eldest son, Naucratius, met death evidently in a hunting accident after a remarkable career of five years in a rustic life of asceticism. The two youngest sons, Gregory and Peter, became bishops of Nyssa and Sebaste respectively. There is no exaggeration in the statement that "it would be difficult to find in the whole of Church history a family so uniformly brilliant."[2] The secret of its spiritual power and an insight into the type of training which largely accounts for this dynamic may be gleaned from a passage in the encomiastic biography of Macrina written by her brother Gregory:

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[1] When Basil writes late in life (Ep. CCLXII:1/403D) that "whatever excellence there is in me is not of family nor of superfluous wealth," he chooses to ignore his birthright.

[2] The family of Basil in three generations produced three saints among its daughters--the elder Macrina, Emmelia, and the younger Macrina, and in one generation three canonized bishops among its sons--Basil, Gregory of Nyssa, and Peter of Sebaste.

The education of the child was her mother's task. She did not, however, employ the usual worldly method of education, which makes a practice of using poetry as a means of training the early years of a child. For she considered it disgraceful and quite unsuitable that a tender and plastic nature should be taught either those tragic passions of womanhood which afforded poets their suggestions and plots or the indecencies of comedy--to be, so to speak, defiled with unseemly tales of "the harem." But such parts of inspired Scripture as you would think were incomprehensible to young children were the subject of the girl's studies; in particular the Wisdom of Solomon,[1] and especially those parts of it which tend toward our moral life. Nor was she ignorant of any part of the chanted Scripture,[2] but at the proper times she went through every part of it. When she rose from bed, or engaged in household duties, or rested, or partook of food, or retired from table, when she went to bed or rose in the night for prayer, the chanted Scripture was her constant companion, like a good fellow-traveller that never deserted her.[3]

Basil Nurtured from Infancy on the Bible. In like manner it could be said that Basil imbibed the Scriptures with his mother's milk. Actually, on account of his frailty as a babe[4] he was put out to be nursed,[5] and it was only when he was stronger that he was sent to his grandmother Macrina to spend his infancy with her on the ancestral country estate at Annesi.[6] In any case it was the maternal side which was prominent in his early spiritual training. It is true that in a reference to "having been brought up

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[1] The apocryphal book seems to be indicated, though Clarke feels that "the Solomonic literature" is meant (W. K. L. Clarke, The Ascetic Works of Saint Basil ["Translations of Christian Literature"; London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1925], p. 25).

[2] The Psalter, the Magnificat, the Benedictus, etc.

[3] P.G. XLVI:962C-964A.

[4] This delicacy clung to him all his life. It appears in the form of a chronic liver ailment throughout his maturity, and the disorder bore so grievously upon him that illness is a frequent theme in his letters. Gregory mentions how Basil took up the study of medicine at Athens because of "his physical delicacy and his care of the sick," and that "he attained to a mastery of the art." The next to the lengthiest of the Longer Rules, the fifty-fifth and last, treats of the matter of illness and remedies, and Clarke (op. cit., p. 228, n. 2) well describes it as "one of the sanest and most Christian things ever written on this subject." Though quite "pinned to his bed" in later life and tormented ceaselessly by outward adversaries as well, Basil seems to have retained a subdued or perhaps sublimated sense of humor. An oft-quoted example of this is found in Ep. CXXXVIII:1; cf. R. Fus. XVII, Brev. XXXI.

[5] Vide Eps. XXXVI and XXXVII.

[6] Ep. CCX:1. Annesi was a village about fifty air line miles west by

from the very beginning by Christian parents," Basil says, "at their knee I learned from a babe the Holy Scriptures."[1] But it was the grandmother who gave him his first lessons in religion. And Basil forgot neither her nor her instruction. "What clearer evidence can there be of my faith," he demands of the Neo-Caesareans, "than that I was brought up by my grandmother, blessed woman, who came from you? I mean the celebrated Macrina who taught me the words of the most blessed Gregory [Thaumaturgus]; which, as far as memory had preserved them down to her day, she cherished herself, while she fashioned and formed me, while yet a child, upon the doctrines of piety."[2] Puech rightly says that the elder Macrina was as great an influence upon Basil's education as his mother;[3] "the teaching about God which I received as a boy from my blessed mother and my grandmother Macrina," Basil states, "I have ever held with increased conviction."[4] The grandmother could regale the little boy with vivid accounts of those stirring days in the wilds of Pontus and tutor him in the tradition which she herself had received from those who heard the very words of the Thaumaturgist. The latter's teaching seems to have been the regula by which she moulded her grandson's religious

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south of Neo-Caesarea, the modern Niksar. On matters of geography see Sir W. M. Ramsay, The Historical Geography of Asia Minor (London: John Murray, 1890), pp. 326-30 and maps opp. pp. 196 and 266. The apparent conflict between the frontispiece map in Giet, Sasimes ..., and Ramsay in the location of Annesi and therefore of Basil's monastic retreat is resolved by reference to Giet, p. 41, n. 3.

[1] De Judicio Dei 1/213E. [2] Ep. CCIV:6/306B.

[3] Aimé Puech, Histoire de la Littérature grecque chrétienne depuis les origines jusqu'à la fin du IV^e siècle ("Collection d'études anciennes"; Paris: "Les belles lettres," 1928-30), III, 237.

[4] Ep. CCXXIII:3/338D. What Moore says with reference to Gregory of Nyssa is as true respecting Basil: "In [the] chain of female relationship it is difficult to say which link is worthier of note, grandmother, mother, or daughter [Macrina]" (Select Writings and Letters of Gregory, Bishop of Nyssa, trans. Wm. Moore and H. A. Wilson ["Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers," V; New York: The Christian Literature Company, 1893], p. 2).

thinking. The effectiveness of her instruction is witnessed by the warmth and vigor of Basil's references to "the tradition of Gregory the truly great."[1] Whatever question may exist as to what Macrina's teaching was in its other details, there is no doubt that it was primarily scriptural. Basil was weaned on the Word.

Basil Trained from Youth in the Best Secular Tradition. All this is not to say that the influence of his father was not likewise decisive in the ultimate formation of Basil's religious character, though it is perhaps safe to assert that it was secondary, at least thus far.[2] But as the little lad outgrew infancy his training gravitated more to his father, who carefully undertook the boy's instruction in the best secular learning. The elder Basil seems to have been teaching at Neo-Caesarea--where he may have had his permanent residence--while the matriarch Macrina conducted the affairs of the family at nearby Annesi. Clarke feels that the training given by the father may have been contemporaneous with that received at the hands of Macrina: "In his earliest years," says Gregory of Nazianzus, "[Basil] was swathed and fashioned under his great father...."[3] Although the father was the primary force in the lad's cultural training, the paternal influence was by no means limited to this sphere: it concerned religion and the virtues of the Christian life no less than the elements of secular knowledge. This is echoed in Gregory's further comment upon the influence of the elder Basil: "Under him then, as life and reason grew and

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[1] Cf. infra, pp. 48ff.

[2] It is significant that while Basil is fervid in his acknowledgments to his grandmother and mother, he nowhere mentions his father or his sister Macrina.

[3] Orat. XLIII:12/P.G.XXXVI:509A.

rose together, our illustrious friend was educated: ... he was trained in general education and practiced in the worship of God, and, to speak concisely, led on by elementary instructions to his future perfection."[1] It was very likely in the course of this training that Basil learned the type of discriminating use of the pagan authors which is the thesis of the Address to Young Men. At any rate it was to his father that Basil owed the foundations of his liberal education and wide culture, and the debt proved to be no small one.

In this respect the education of Basil contrasts sharply with the way in which Macrina was brought up, and the way in which she in turn educated the young Peter after his father's death.[2] It was probably the spirit of the age as well as jealous concern for the little girl's welfare which motivated Emmelia in excluding everything but Scripture from the education of Macrina. Similarly, the latter's own training, reinforced by temperament, accounts for her procedure in limiting the education of her youngest brother to the same narrow curriculum. Basil however enjoyed the advantage of his father as paidagōgos for about the first fourteen years of his life. Thus it was that the boy received his first lessons in grammar, was intro-

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[1] Ibid., 509BC.

[2] Apparently neither did Gregory, the future bishop of Nyssa, enjoy Basil's educational advantages: vide Gregory's Life of St. Macrina, P.G. XLVI:982B.

It was about the time Peter was born, or around the time of the younger Basil's departure from Caesarea, that death came to the elder Basil, whereupon the latter's brother, another Gregory and also a bishop, assumed a certain oversight of the family (Basil, Ep. LIX). The chief burden however seems to have been undertaken by the young Macrina. It might be added that not long after Basil's election to the episcopacy this same uncle Gregory took umbrage at his elevation, and the difficulty was compounded by the artless effort of the younger Gregory (Basil's brother) to heal the breach by forging letters in the name of their uncle.

duced to the historians, and learned to interpret the poets. Especially in a day when it was the Christian fashion to despise secular letters and education, it is significant that Gregory of Nazianzus goes out of his way to represent the elder Basil as one who was a fervent Christian and at the same time a firm friend of "external culture." It was in this form that the mould of Basil's "double education"[1] was cast. The child was reared in all godly piety and at the same time well schooled in the learning of the world. Though he was later to eschew "the tradition of those outside," Basil was no stranger to it: he did not reject it by default. And when in the fierce controversies of his maturity it came to a case of fighting rhetorical and sophistic fire with fire, he carried a blazing brand into the camp of his enemies.[2]

Caesarea. Now, however, the time had arrived which entailed Basil's forsaking the ancestral home in furtherance of his education. He was now in adolescence, and it was natural that his father should send him to Caesarea--the city in which he had once taught and of which he possessed the personal knowledge that would reassure parental anxieties. As capital of

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[1] This apt designation dates at least from Fialon, who begins his Étude littéraire (pp. 7f.): "If St. Basil is one of the most original types of the new spirit which effected the alliance of Greece and the Orient, it must be due principally to the double education which he received--on the one hand, in the family, in the church, and in solitude; on the other, in the schools of the grammarians, the rhetors, and the philosophers. The church prepared the theologian and the great bishop; the schools, the thinker and the great orator."

[2] "Like a skilled chieftain arming himself against his adversaries with each kind of knowledge, with both he rises above his opponents, overcoming in each field those who think they possess some strength against the truth in one of two fields--overcoming by means of the Scriptures the heretics on the one hand who bring forward the Scriptures in self-defence, entrapping the Greeks on the other by means of their own doctrine" (Gregory of Nyssa, Funeral Oration on His Brother Basil, P.G. XLVI:789BC).

Cappadocia, the other province with which Basil's life and family are associated, Caesarea was an important commercial, cultural, and Christian center, with Hellenistic-Christian influence in the ascendency.[1] Here Basil immersed himself in Greek grammar and literature and widened his knowledge of the historians and poets, though Latin seems to have remained a closed book to him.[2] Fortified by the training received at the hands of his father, he soon outstripped his fellow-students and was presently rivaling his professors. According to Ceillier one of the latter was Hesychius,[3] while Schmid and Stählin suggest that the Neoplatonic philosopher Eustathius may have been another.[4] Here his celebrated friendship with Gregory of Nazianzus may have begun, and he possibly made the acquaintance of the otherwise unknown Eusebius to whom the nostalgic Ep. CCLXXI is addressed. Here he also seems to have developed a hero-worshipful attitude of affection for the resident archbishop, Dianius. As to the precise nature of Basil's training the panegyric of the Nazianzan supplies about the only direct information we possess, but Fialon suggests that we might reconstruct something of Basil's schooling at this stage from his Address to Young Men

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[1] Greg. Naz., Orat. XLIII:13. Caesarea is the ancient Mazaca, the modern Kaisarieh of Anatolia. It was in all likelihood the birthplace of Basil. Cf. e.g. Ep. LI, where he recounts his lifelong intimacy with Dianius, bishop of Caesarea, and apparently speaks of the city as patris (vide Jackson, "Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers," Vol. VIII: St. Basil, p. xiv, n. 1).

[2] Thus Fialon, op. cit., p. 11; but the Nazianzan (Orat. XLIII:15) reports that Basil "was versed in many languages before his arrival" at Athens.

[3] Remy Ceillier, Histoire générale des auteurs sacrés et ecclésiastiques (new ed.; Paris: L. Vivès, 1858-63), IV, 349b: the reader is referred to Ep. LXIV.

[4] W. Schmid and O. Stählin, revs., Wilhelm Von Christs Geschichte der Griechischen Litteratur, 6th ed., Part II, 2d half ("Handbuch der Altertumswissenschaft"; Munich: C. H. Beck, 1924), p. 1407, n. 3. Concerning the school in Caesarea, the note refers to F. Schemmel, PhW. XLII (1922), 620ff.

on How to Benefit from Greek Literature. In the pedagogical practice of the Orient in the fourth century the Greek classics were the basis of the curriculum, the Iliad and the Odyssey the texts par excellence. Many pagan teachers probably followed the example of Plato, as did many Christians, in making use of the poets on a morally selective basis, closing the ears of their pupils to the bawdy and reprehensible after the manner of Ulysses toward the sirens (to use a figure from the Address). Undoubtedly Basil shared in instruction of this caliber as well as in the kind that was not so discriminating. For the rest, the Caesarean experience was significant chiefly as a steppingstone to larger fields of intellectual adventure for the brilliant young Cappadocian.

Constantinople. Up to this point the studies of Basil had probably covered what would be the general equivalent of modern secondary instruction. In the fourth century it was the custom of serious students not only to journey from place to place in quest of knowledge, but the promising young man would almost certainly visit one or more of the important cosmopolitan centers sooner or later. It is thus natural to find Basil moving to Constantinople as soon as he had exhausted the resources of Caesarea. He knew that he would find exciting challenge in the imperial city, for Constantinople was athrob with the cultural currents of the day and abounded with sophists, rhetors, and philosophers.[1] Very little is known about his sojourn in the great metropolitan center and newly chosen capital. Gregory makes hardly any allusion to it beyond the statement that the most valuable lessons of rhetoric and philosophy Basil "soon assimilated by the quickness and force of his powers." His stay probably lasted several

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[1] It was also the home of the official Arianism which Basil was to spend his life combating.

years. It seems fairly certain that Basil here met the noted rhetor Libanius and established the close friendship and discipleship reflected in the Basil-Libanius correspondence. While the authenticity of many or all of the twenty-five pieces comprising this exchange (Eps. CCCXXXV-CCCLIX) is disputed,[1] much may be said for the position of Clarke that even if the letters themselves are not genuine, they may well have been inspired by an authentic tradition of the relationship between the two principals. Besides, the genuineness of a good half of the items, Eps. CCCXXXV-CCCXLVI and CCCLVIII, is winning support. These reveal the deep and lasting impressions made by Basil and Libanius each on the other. Epistles CCCXXXV-CCCXXXIX and CCCXLVI present the spectacle of Basil, a devout Christian and indeed a priest, sending students to the pagan Libanius, while the overdone compliments and excessive flattery exhibited by the letters undoubtedly reflect genuine esteem as well as an epistolary characteristic of the period.

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[1] Modern scholarship is abandoning the extremes of wholesale rejection (Garnier-Maran, Batiffol, Allard) or uncritical acceptance (Tillemont, Rivière), though the in toto support of Seeck is ponderously constructed. Part of the correspondence is disavowed (de Ghellinck, Schmid and Stählin), but more than half the items (Eps. CCCXXXV-CCCXLVI and CCCLVIII) are gaining recognition in accord with the analysis of Bessières, pp. 165-74 (cf. e.g. Puech, III, 311-2). Vide Deferrari, IV, xiii-xv, for a summary and bibliography of the subject, and Schmid and Stählin's n. 4, p. 1412.

"Upon the question as to when [Basil] could have become acquainted with Libanius (before 351 in Nicomedia, between 350 and 352 in Constantinople, or in 357 at Antioch during the journey to Egypt) cf. G. Pasquali, BphW. XXXIV (1914), 1510f.; supra 988,2; 989,3...." (The quotation is from Schmid and Stählin, p. 1407, n. 4.)

Sozomen (H.E. VI,17:1) appears to have followed Socrates (H.E. IV,26:6) in confusing our Basil with a Basil of Antioch.

In Ep. CCCXXXVI Libanius presents a pupil named Celsus as having been a dear friend of Basil evidently during this period and as having accompanied the latter to Athens. Later in Antioch Libanius was to have as his pupils Basil's close friend, John Chrysostom, and the latter's intimate, Theodore of Mopsuestia, with whom Basil was undoubtedly also well acquainted.

Basil must have been an avid pupil, eagerly absorbing the lessons of the learned master of rhetoric, for he continued to excel in demonstrations of the art. Fialon's judgment is that even as Julian is recognized as a student of Libanius by his style, Basil's writings witness no less to his sophistic training. However, it is certainly too strong a statement to add, as does Fialon, that Basil never renounced his teachers any more than did the Apostate;[1] for consciously Basil abjures--if unconsciously he cannot abandon--their teaching, as we shall see.[2] The French scholar is on surer ground when he quotes the Address to Young Men 4/177A-C as a passage "which must surely be an echo of one of the lessons of Libanius."[3] On the whole, then, what was the character of the instruction which Basil received under such professors?

> As today, two subjects were given simultaneously in the great schools, letters and the sciences. The sophists taught eloquence, the philosophers the whole of things--being, that is to say, God, the world, and man. But the teachers did not do all the talking. The spirited youth of the Orient would have had little satisfaction in our indifferent, cold, and one-sided pedagogy. The teacher expounded; then there would be animated discussion in which teachers and students shone, and in which Julian, "who instructed others more than they did him," won the name of Fountain of Knowledge.[4]

Athens. It is thus that Basil studied rhetoric and philosophy at Constantinople and also at Athens, to which he proceeded in the year 351. He was now in his early manhood, between twenty-one and twenty-two years of age. The Athenian experience was one of the most formative in his life, extending from 351 to about the end of 355. Fabulous Athens! Here was Basil at last in the cultural cradle if not the cultural capital of the world, "the mother of letters." Here his acquaintance with Julian took on

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[1] Fialon, op. cit., p. 22.

[2] Infra, pp. 78ff.

[3] Fialon, op. cit., pp. 15f.

[4] Ibid., p. 18.

stature.[1] Here his friendship with Gregory of Nazianzus deepened to the extent that Basil became the Nazianzan's bosom companion, his veritable alter ego.[2] Gregory, who was somewhat older than Basil, had preceded his countryman to Athens, and it was through his intercession that the latter was spared the hazing accorded newcomers to the university life. Basil was soon established in an intensive regimen of study and virtue. His was now the opportunity of sitting at the feet of the most celebrated teachers of the age. Gregory speaks of their renown as being world-wide, but concerning their identity he leaves us to surmise. Among the Athenian masters who enjoyed great acclaim during this epoch were a pagan, Himerius of Bithynia, and Prohaeresius of Armenia, a Christian to whom Rome raised a statue proclaiming him "King of Eloquence." It is a fair certainty that Basil and Gregory were among their eager students.[3] Rhetoric and philosophy con-

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[1] Julian did not arrive at Athens until after the middle of 355, or not long before Basil left. It is generally agreed that Basil had known Gregory at Caesarea, and he may possibly have met Julian and his brother Gallus while there. The Basilian-Julianic correspondence, Eps. XXXIX-XLI and CCCLX in Basil, is unanimously rejected as spurious, so that we must unfortunately part with the Renan-esque picture of the future archbishop and the future emperor studying the best models of literature and carefully reading the Scriptures together. Likewise the engaging thought that Basil refused an invitation to court from the emperor in 362 must go.

Among other early friendships those with the Sophronius of Ep. CCCLXXII and the Terentius of Eps. LXIV, XCIX, CCXIV, and CCXVI may have been formed during Basil's university years. An incident of the Athenian sojourn which led to bitter consequences long after was a letter written by Basil to Apollinarius of Laodicea when both were laymen (cf. Ep. CCXXIV:2); Basil intimates that his opponents did not scruple even to alter its contents to his injury. It is not improbable that Diodore (cf. infra, p. 158) was also a companion of Basil during these years.

[2] Gregory speaks of himself as being "half dead and cleft in twain, torn away from our great union" in Basil's death (Orat. XLIII:80/P.G.601C). The only breach in this Davidic-Johnathanic friendship occurred shortly after Basil became archbishop, when he forced his friend to accept the see of Sasima, an obscure village where the post changed horses: vide S. Giet, Sasimes, une méprise de saint Basile (Paris: Librairie Lecoffre, 1941).

[3] Socrates (IV,26) and Sozomen (VI,17). Eunapius (Philos. Vit., p. 126) tells us that Himerius had become a Christian before Julian assumed the reign in 361.

tinued to be the two foci of instruction. Declamations of Himerius still preserved to us may well have been heard by Basil, and as such reveal the type of rhetorical training with which he was imbued.[1] In a declamation against an evil rich man Himerius has a passage of the very sort that would be likely to impress the future author of the homilies To the Rich (VII), In Famine and Drought (VIII), and on Luke 12:18 (VI). Basil's discipline in philosophy must have been no less intense than his training in rhetoric. Fialon gleans from Julian some idea of the content of the philosophic curriculum as taught to Basil by the Neoplatonists of Athens:

> It embraced logic, natural science, and ethics, each of which, true to the mania for threesomes which characterized the whole school, was further subdivided into three parts. Logic, depending upon whether it based itself on what is true, probable, or apparent, was called demonstrative, persuasive, or sophistical. Natural science comprehended theology [sic], mathematics, and the theory of ideas. Moral science--practicum as Julian called it--depending upon whether it had in view the guidance of the individual, the family, or the state, was called ethics, economics, or politics. This vast collection of subjects was subsumed under one head, the science of being. Logic taught the intellect how to know itself, how to direct itself, and how to find God in itself; natural science told the intellect what God and the world were; and moral science instructed it about the destiny of man and the means of attaining this.[2]

Along such lines did Basil proceed to perfect his grasp of the elements which made up a liberal education.

Both in and out of the lecture halls the promising young Cappadocian soon proved his mettle. This is quite indisputable even when allowance is made for the panegyric excesses of Gregory.[3] The jealousy and antagonism of Basil's fellows not only melted but seemingly turned to admiration, and some gathered around him as a leader. His character and ability even

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[1] Fialon, op. cit., pp. 19 ff. [2] Ibid., p. 23.

[3] F. Boulenger (Grégoire de Nazianze: discours funèbres ... ["Textes et documents"; Paris: A. Picard et fils, 1908], pp. ix ff.) shows how the scheme of his eulogy follows the stereotyped pattern of the day.

attracted public attention. But neither this recognition nor the dazzling distractions of the pagan city deflected him from his course. "Two ways were known to us," says Gregory, "the first of greater value, the second of lesser consequence: the one leading to our sacred abodes and the teachers there, the other to secular instructors. We gave up all other pursuits to those who desired them--festivals, spectacles, celebrations, banquets."[1] Thus the two ways were in reality one. "The sole pursuit of both of us was virtue, and setting our life's course by future hopes, having retired from this world before our actual departure hence. With a view to this we directed all our life and actions, under the guidance of the commandment, as we whetted each other to greater virtue...."[2] "...Under the guidance of the commandment." As Clarke points out, there is no doubt that the development of Basil thus far was one-sided and unduly academic. But neither does there seem to be any question that when all was said and done, the Scriptures and traditions learned by Basil at his grandmother's and his mother's knee were asserting themselves.

Basil's Christian "Heredity" vs. His Educational "Environment." This poses a consideration which is primary for us and which needs to be drawn to sharper focus. How do the components of the "double education" of Basil, his nurture in the Scriptures and his training in the schools, resolve themselves? What of the Bible and beliefs of his fathers in the face of the best worldly wisdom? To what extent did an antithesis assert itself? Basil had now completed his formal schooling, climaxed as it were by the proud privilege of university training in Athens. What effects did the

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[1] Orat. XLIII:21/P.G.524A. [2] Ibid., 20/P.G.521C.

seductions of her pagan glory have? Basil had been steeped in them from about his twenty-first or -second through his twenty-sixth year. The allurement of the exalted metaphysic and of the pure and austere morality of the Alexandrians must have been strong, says Fialon--the mysticism of Plotinus, his rapture in God through love aided by prayer and study, his threefold god as in the Gospel. To be sure, the philosophy which Basil imbibed at Athens, though not Christian, had close points of contact with the religion of the New Testament. "When the disciples of Plato would tell him what the soul is, whence it came and whither it goes, what lowers it and what elevates it, what brings it slavery and what gives it freedom, how it may escape the former and enjoy the latter--would not Basil welcome such a teaching with eagerness, even as Libanius tells us Julian did?"[1] Certainly the effect upon him could not help but be profound. Its nature and extent have been made the object of considerable study.[2] This all goes to show

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[1] Fialon, op. cit., pp. 23f.

[2] The literature includes: Father Calasanctius, De beeldspraak bij den heiligen Basilius den Groote (Nimègue: Librairie Dekker en van de Vegt, 1941)--reviewed by Amand, Revue Bénédictine, LIV (1942), 145-50; J. M. Campbell, The Influence of the Second Sophistic on the Style of the Sermons of St. Basil the Great (Washington: The Catholic University of America, 1922); Yves Courtonne, Saint Basile et l'hellénisme (Paris: Firmin-Didot et Cie, 1934); Karl Gronau, De Basilio, Gregorio Nazienzeno Nyssenoque Platonis imitatoribus (diss.; Göttingen, 1908); ibid., Posidonius, eine Quelle für Basilius' Hexahemeros (Braunschweig, 1912); ibid., Poseidonios und die jüdisch-christliche Genesisexegese (Berlin: B. G. Teubner, 1914); Paul Henry, Les états du texte de Plotin ("Études plotiniennes"; Paris: Desclée de Brouwer et Cie, [1937]), pp. 159-96; A. Jahn, Basilius Magnus Plotinizans, Supplementum editionis Plotini Creuzerianae, Basilii Magni Garnerianae (Basle, 1838); J. Lévie, "Les sources de la septième et de la huitième homélies de saint Basile sur l'Hexaméron (Musée belge; Revue de philologie classique [1920], pp. 113-49); F. M. Padelford, Essays on the Study and Use of Poetry by Plutarch and Basil the Great (New York, H. Holt & Co., 1902); T. L. Shear, The Influence of Plato on Saint Basil (Baltimore: J. H. Furst Co., 1906); Trunk, De Basilio Magno sermonis Attici imitatore (Stuttgart, 1911); and, for Hom. VII, A. Dirking, S. Basilii Magni de divitiis et paupertate sententiae quam habeant rationem cum veterum philosophorum doctrina (diss. inaug.; Münster, 1911).

that the influences of his secular training were far-reaching, and so indelible that even the drastic spiritual reorientation he was about to experience only brought them into eclipse rather than extinction. To their power and permanency every page of his writings bears witness. Here is revealed a thinker who not only studied the classics but who assimilated them and made them his own. In addition to being well versed in the non-Christian literature he is clever and resourceful at using what he has read. He is a master of the techniques of rhetoric and employs them abundantly, though never as an end in themselves. "Not only do his eloquence and his style imply resort to fine models," says Rivière, "but his very spirit bears the most profound imprint of this classical culture...."[1] "In classical culture," Schaff declares, "he yields to none of his contemporaries."[2] Another writer agrees that there is none of the fathers who makes so much use of heathen authors: had the records of his life been lost, his works would have fully sufficed to demonstrate the rich cultural heritage which he possessed.[3] Even when, as in the Ascetica, the Christian spirit is all-pervasive and biblical quotations are everywhere, his ethic is impregnated with Hellenistic philosophy.[4] To mention Plato, Aristotle, Demosthenes, Plutarch, Neoplatonism, Plotinus, Cynicism, Stoicism--this would

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[1] Jean Rivière, Saint Basile, évêque de Césarée ("Les moralistes chrétiens"; 2d ed., Paris: Librairie Victor Lecoffre, 1925), p. 7.

[2] Philip Schaff, History of the Christian Church, III (rev. ed.; New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1887), p. 902.

[3] R. T. Smith, St. Basil the Great ("The Fathers for English Readers"; New York: Pott, Young, & Co., 1879), p. 189.

[4] Dom D. Amand, L'ascèse monastique de saint Basile (Éditions de Maredsous [1949]).

be to leave far from complete the mere catalogue of the streams of ancient and current thought which flowed into the reservoir of a great mind. Suffice it to say that he borrows continually from these and many other sources in ideas, definitions, expositions. In other words, Basil reflected the best philosophical culture. It is evident that his studies made him a genuine product of his age and that he is a prime example of fourth century education in its finest form.

> Basil starts for his life's work with the equipment of the most liberal education which the age could supply. He has studied Greek literature, rhetoric, and philosophy, under the most famous teachers. He has been brought into contact with every class of mind. His training has been no narrow hothouse forcing of theological opinion and ecclesiastical sentiment. The world which he is to renounce, to confront, to influence, is not a world unknown to him.[1]

While the essentially non-Christian character of Basil's training in these years deserves emphasis, it would not be correct to say that it was positively pagan. Virtue was a characteristic of the Christians but it was not their monopoly. As already pointed out, much of the classical curriculum was ennobling and uplifting both in its content and in the manner of its presentation by the master rhetors and sophists of the day. But regardless of all that was good in paganism, Basil remained aloof from it. Why did he cleave to his Christian persuasion? The fact that he did so can only be attributed to the power of his early religious upbringing and training in the Scriptures, and to this force as it exerted itself throughout his whole educational career.[2] Several considerations have vital bear-

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[1] Blomfield Jackson, "Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers," Vol. VIII: St. Basil, p. xvi.

[2] In his Funeral Oration Gregory of Nyssa refers to "the vessel of election, Basil, lofty in life and in eloquence, who was pleasing unto God from birth, who was venerable in character from his youth, who like Moses

ing upon this point. In the first place, we know that not long after his return home Basil underwent a profound spiritual reorientation, a complete change of outlook. To be sure, it was a change within his Christian expe-rience, not from it. But this remarkable intensification of his spiritual-ity is the last thing we should have expected from a young man fresh from Athens in the full flush of intellectual pride and vigor, if the two influ-ences, pagan and Christian, had been in an indifferent equilibrium all the while. What actually happened is explained by the consideration that one of them was dominant, and Basil's subsequent renunciation of the world leaves no doubt of which was the stronger. The strength of its grip is seen in the reactionary nature of his outward rejection of everything that his education represented. In the conscious struggle within his soul, the scriptural faith won a dramatic victory over the wisdom of the world: he forthrightly disavowed the one and zealously gave himself to the other.

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was instructed in all knowledge of secular learning, and who from babyhood to the attainment of perfection was nurtured and grew up and flourished through the study of Holy Writ..." (P.G. XLVI:789B). It is to be regretted that the Nyssenian, unlike Gregory of Nazianzus, is so largely homiletical and so little biographical in his panegyric, and that he did not write it on the order of his Life of St. Macrina. Thus with an opportunity to give testimony that would have dispelled the uncertainty over Basil's birth-place, he writes: "Now what is the noble birth of Basil? And what is his country? His family was intimacy with the Divinity; and his fatherland, virtue" (ibid., 816B). But the Nyssenian was certainly apt in his choice of Moses as the archetype of Basil in terms of the factor of "double educa-tion:" "In what then was the imitation? A certain princess of the Egyp-tians having adopted Moses trained him in the education of her land, though he did not leave the breasts of his mother as long as his early age needed to be sustained by such nurture. This truth testifies the same thing about our teacher. For though nourished by pagan learning, he always clung to the bosom of the church, strengthening and maturing his soul with teachings therefrom. Afterwards Moses denied the spurious relation of his falsely-called mother. And Basil did not let a reputation of which he was not proud continue for very long. For having shaken off all the glory of worldly learning just as the former refused the kingly office, he withdrew to the life of humility, just as Moses held even the Hebrews preferable to the treasures of Egypt" (ibid., 808D-809A).

The truth is that he seems never to have been overly impressed with secular science or carried away by the classics. On the contrary, in his latter years he was to look back with regret on how he had spent a great deal of time in such vanity "and had wasted nearly all my youth in the vain labor which I underwent in acquiring the wisdom made foolish by God."[1]

Secondly, the prior fact of Basil's exemplary conduct and character while training with the sophists witnesses to the ascendency of the scriptural faith all the while in his twofold education. Actually, the dynamic of his "conversion" and of his subsequent concentration on the Scriptures in the ascetic life was such that a strong biblical ardor must have burned in his soul throughout his entire educational pilgrimage. At Caesarea, Gregory of Nazianzus tells us, Basil manifested "a culture beyond his years and a steadfastness of character beyond his culture."[2] His pursuit was not philosophy in the worldly sense but in the sense of "breaking from the world, and fellowship with God." In Athens his first concern was likewise virtue. "Who, owing to his character," asks Gregory, "was less in need of education?" Excessive application to mathematics he despised "as useless to those whose desire is godliness: so that it is possible to admire what he chose more than what he neglected, or what he neglected more than what he chose." After all, his friend asks, what are Basil's achievements in the disciplines of learning "compared with the moral discipline of the man?"[3] No other explanation for all this need be sought than the one Gregory gives: "the guidance of the commandment"--the Bible. By "the commandment" Basil lived, and in it he must have moved and had his true being.[4]

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[1] Ep. CCXXIII:3. [2] Orat. XLIII:13. [3] Ibid., 23.

[4] In his life of his sister, Greg. Nys. tells us that Macrina's hands "never ceased to work according to the commandment" (P.G. 981A).

It is significant that the recognition Basil received as a student was evoked as much by his model behavior as by his academic excellence. The acclaim did not turn his head any more than the teaching subverted his faith. It is true that in describing his conversion experience he says that "I wept many tears over my miserable life," and that "first of all was I minded to make some mending of my ways, long perverted as they were by my intimacy with wicked men."[1] Fialon takes a passage in Ep. II of Gregory of Nazianzus to mean that upon returning to Caesarea Basil fell into living "une vie assez dissipée,"[2] and Boulenger[3] and Courtonne[4] repeat the charge. Gregory the friend tells us that Basil was somewhat lionized by the city and Gregory the brother writes that he was puffed up with overweening pride, but the Nazianzan also states that upon their return they merely ventured "a slight indulgence to the world and the stage sufficient to gratify the general desire" of their countrymen, and that this was not made "from any inclination to theatrical display." Certainly we cannot convict Basil of dissipation on the evidence. His own statements are undoubtedly hyperbole motivated by the desire to dramatize his spiritual crisis.

In the third place, the transformation in Basil's spiritual outlook following his return from Athens may be set in another light, this time in relation to such a work as the Address to Young Men. It is to be questioned whether before his "conversion" he would have written this little treatise as later he did, with its complete subserviency of the classics to

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[1] Ep. CCXXIII:2/337C.

[2] Fialon, op. cit., p. 28.

[3] Discours funèbres ..., p. lxxxvi.

[4] Saint Basile et l'hellénisme, p. 10, n. 1, and p. 12.

the Scriptures. This is true even though he argues his thesis with a moderation and a catholicity of judgment that is most impressive in the circumstances. The wonder is that the all-conquering force of his bibliocentric devotion left him with any sympathy for the wisdom of that world which he had so resolutely renounced. Generally he seems to yield altogether to the radicalism of his spiritual about-face and with iconoclastic abandon to reject secular culture outright. But this is more apparent than real. Consciously Basil did turn his back on worldly wisdom; in the realm of the unconscious, however, this culture continued to assert itself.[1] He could declare his emancipation from vain philosophy from henceforth; unconsciously he was as much in bondage to the past as anyone else. During his monastic retreat he was all but completely preoccupied with the Bible. In his ascetic writings the biblical spirit reigns supreme and biblical quotations are profuse. Yet it is in these very writings that the profound influence of Greek philosophy is unmistakable. Thus to a remarkable extent the Greek tradition entered into the formation of a Christian doctrinal system from which, at first glance, any such ideologically foreign strain would seem to be excluded.[2]

It is a testimony to Basil's creativity as a thinker no less than to the strength of each of the divergent elements in his twofold education that in his ascetic doctrine they are moulded into a logically coordinated, organic system. This is true of the writings of Basil generally--someone[3] has pointed out that they are "monuments of industrious composition, and indicative of a memory stored with various learning, and of the daily and

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[1] Cf. infra, chap. III.

[2] Amand, L'ascèse monastique de saint Basile, p. viii.

[3] Jackson, NpNF, p. xxiii.

effective study of Holy Scripture." The synthesis which Basil so largely and perhaps so unconsciously achieved is one of his greatest contributions. It has well been said that the epochal success which crowned the Council of 381 was "a work of ecclesiastical policy and also the fruit of a spirit of theological moderation able to reconcile tradition and orthodoxy with Hellenic culture and Origenian science...."[1] The ability to measure the Christian faith and the learning of Greece against each other was to be found only in a man of unusual gifts and grace. In spite of the underlying tension between the two traditions in Basil's own mind, his reasonableness brought him to conciliate them in spite of himself. In him we have at the same time perhaps the most biblical and the most classical of the Greek fathers, the fusion of Christian spirit and secular culture: "his entire work attests the extent to which his spirit is impregnated not only with the marrow of Holy Scripture but also with ancient thought."[2] He is a "child of Greece and of Asia."[3] In Salaville's opinion the union of Hellenism and Christianity in Basil is so perfect that "the bishop of Caesarea is indeed the Christian Hellenist in the truest and best sense of the word."[4] And if it be true that in his ascetic-monastic doctrine he achieved so remarkable a unity of the two components in his double education that the result gives the impression of monolithic cohesion,[5] it is

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[1] P. Batiffol, Anciennes littératures chrétiennes: I, La littérature grecque ("Bibliothèque de l'enseignement de l'Histoire ecclésiastique"; 2d ed., Paris: Librairie Victor Lecoffre, 1898), p. 284.

[2] S. Salaville, "De l'hellénisme au byzantinisme," Echos d'orient, XXX (1931), 37.

[3] Fialon, op. cit., p. 188.

[4] Salaville, op. cit., p. 42; cf. p. 37.

[5] Amand, L'ascèse monastique de saint Basile, p. vii.

also true that the Bible is the foundation stone. While this cannot be overemphasized, the influence of philosophy is not to be discounted. An exchange between Basil and Libanius epitomizes the matter. After referring to his own single-minded devotion to the Scriptures, Basil had rather apologetically written his old teacher: "If ever I learned anything from you, I have forgotten it in the course of time."[1] In his answer Libanius reveals himself as one who was indeed "wise as well as a sophist:"[2] "Keep to the books which you say are inferior in style though better in sense [the Scriptures]. No one hinders you. But of the principles which are ever mine, and once were yours, the roots both remain and will remain, as long as you exist. Though you water them ever so little, no length of time will ever completely destroy them."[3]

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[1] Ep. CCCXXXIX.

[2] --To use Basil's own phrase a few lines later.

[3] Basilian Ep. CCCXL. Cf. the conclusion of Gregory of Nyssa's Ep. X, "To Libanius"--if Ogle is right in so assigning it (cf. his n. 4, p. 533, NpNF, V): "For if Basil was the author of our oratory, and if his wealth came from your treasures, then what we possess is yours, even though we received it through others. But if our attainments are scanty, so is the water in a jar; still it comes from the Nile."

Chapter II

BASIL'S RENUNCIATION: THE BIBLICAL BASIS OF HIS ASCÈSE

Basil's Auspicious Return. It is somewhat of a commentary upon the make-up of the two men that when the day of departing Athens came, Gregory of Nazianzus was moved by the frantic importunities of his friends to remain (as he did a little longer), while Basil could not be shaken from his purpose despite the "piteous spectacle" of lament and entreaty which reigned. He had set his mind on seeking out the celebrated Cappadocian philosopher Eustathius, whom he hoped to find at Caesarea. Hurrying home by way of "the city on the Hellespont," usually conceded to be Constantinople,[1] he must have arrived at Caesarea early in 356, only to find that the savant had left for Egypt. But there was no lack of other matters to claim his attention. Basil was now the owner of considerable property, the family inheritance having been divided among the nine surviving children. His mother had settled on the ancestral country estate at Annesi together with his eldest sister Macrina, who was raising her little brother Peter; the rest of the large family was no longer united.[2] Besides being a man of affluence, Basil was now a man of influence as well. The populace of

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[1] Jackson is of the opinion that Lampsacus is meant (NpNF, VIII: p. xvi; p. 109, n. 5), though H. Weiss believes that Basil witnessed a brush between Eunomians and Christians in Constantinople at this time (Die grossen Kappadocier Basilius, Gregor von Nazianz und Gregor von Nyssa als Exegeten [Braunsberg: A. Martens, 1872], p. 6).

[2] Basil's father had long since died, and the old Macrina as well; his other four sisters had entered into excellent marriages; Gregory, the future bishop of Nyssa, was still in secular life; and Naucratius was pursuing "the mark of philosophy" in ascetic retirement.

Caesarea welcomed him enthusiastically, and he was entreated to step into his father's avocation as a professor of rhetoric. Accepting, he taught for possibly a year and a half with conspicuous success, deigning to undertake even the instruction of boys.[1] The Asiatic cities evidently rendered some of their choicest tributes to successful sophists, for his panegyrist extols Basil as having been acclaimed by Caesarea "a second founder and patron." So great did his reputation become that the people of distant Neo-Caesarea sent a deputation of leading citizens to obtain his services for their youth, though this may have occurred in connection with a visit of Basil to the family home at nearby Annesi;[2] in any case it seems that the delegation all but forcibly "detained" him. Before departing Athens Basil had covenanted with Gregory to retire to an ascetic life of "philosophy" upon their return, but this was now obscured by the concerns which pressed upon the prominent professor and man of affairs.[3] If we are to believe his brother Gregory, Basil's head was completely turned by the adulation and success which attended him.[4] Though it is doubtful that he capitulated immoderately to a life of ease and soft refinement,[5] the period must have been one of some peril for the admired young rhetor. "In the unsympathetic atmosphere of pagan Athens, Basil had preserved his vocation to religion;

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[1] Cf. Rufinus, H.E. II,9; Basil, Ep. CCCLVIII.

[2] Ep. CCX:2. It is difficult to see how Venables (DCB, I, 284a) and P. Allard (Saint Basile ["Les saints"; 7th ed., Paris: Librairie Lecoffre, 1929], p. 21) so positively derive two separate visits from this passage, but cf. Jackson, NpNF, VIII, p. xvi, n. 9.

[3] This stage of Basil's life may be echoed in Ep. II:2.

[4] Greg. Nys., Life St. Mac., P.G. XLVI/965C. The accusation of pride clung to Basil all his life: cf. Jerome, Ep. LXXXIV (Op. I:529/P.L.XXII:749).

[5] Fialon professes to find this in Ep. II of Greg. Naz. as noted above (p. 23), while Venables thinks that it is reflected in Ep. VI of Greg. Neither letter seems to afford any basis for an indictment of Basil.

in the whirl of flattery and glory that rolled around him in Caesarea he came near to losing it."[1] We have pointed out that Gregory of Nazianzus attributes Basil's worldly concessions to a mere desire to gratify the fervent popular feeling rather than to display and vainglory. In any case his sister Macrina was more stern in her judgment and more unsparing in her counsel, and hers was to be the decisive influence.

"Awakening" and Renunciation. For if the world lay at Basil's feet, it soon turned out to be a dream world. He was to be shaken out of his slumber with remarkable suddenness and consequences. Basil himself tells about it in one of his letters.[2] He first refers to how he had wasted nearly all his youth in pursuit of foolish wisdom. "When like a man roused from deep sleep," he continues, "I finally turned my eyes to the marvellous light of the truth of the Gospel, I perceived the uselessness of 'the wisdom of the princes of this world who come to nought.' I wept many tears over my miserable life, and prayed that guidance might be vouchsafed me to admit me to the doctrines of true religion." Thus did Basil break with the past in a decisive act of repentance that was to issue in renunciation. The significance of the change for his future and for that of the church is well-nigh incalculable. Though seemingly accomplished overnight, Basil's awakening was the result of spiritual forces which had long been at work and which had their roots in the pious, scriptural training of his childhood.[3] Nor had he forgotten or forsworn the commitment which he had made

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[1] R. J. Deferrari, ed. and trans., Saint Basil: The Letters (4 vols., Loeb Classical Library; New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1926-34), I, xx.

[2] Ep. CCXXIII:2.

[3] As Basil puts it in later life (Ep. CCXXIII:3/338DE): "On my coming

with Gregory at Athens to give himself to the ascetic life of "philosophy"--the true Christian life. But the immediate cause of his change of heart was the resolute intervention of his sister. In the face of his seemingly inordinate vanity Macrina resolved to take him in hand. Using some forthright and earnest persuasion, she proceeded to puncture his self-conceit and to challenge him to the fulfillment of his Athenian resolve. The death of Naucratius about this time may have served to give a more sober turn to the thoughts of Basil, as it did to those of Macrina. Elements of similarity between Basil's subsequent "conversion" and the experience of Augustine are evident in the quotation above where Basil describes his awakening, as well as in the way he continues. "First of all," he goes on, "was I minded to make some mending of my ways, long perverted as they were by my intimacy with wicked men. Then I read the Gospel...." It is notable that for the reconstitution of his spiritual life Basil turned to the Bible. Just as he had lived by the commandment at Athens, so now he proceeded to search the Scriptures. "I saw there that a great means of reaching perfection was the selling of one's goods, the sharing them with the poor, the giving up of all care for this life, and the refusal to allow the soul to be turned by any sympathy toward things of earth." Basil did not hesitate. Nothing daunted by the dismay of his friends, he forthwith abandoned his professorial chair in favor of the ascetic life, renouncing not only the goods of this world but also its wisdom. The spectacle of this gifted young man of

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to ripeness of reason I did not shift from one opinion to another, but carried out the principles delivered to me by my parents. Just as the seed when it grows is first tiny and then gets bigger but always preserves its identity, not changed in kind though gradually perfected in growth, so I reckon the same doctrine to have grown in my case through my progress. What I hold now has not replaced what I held at the beginning."

aristocratic family, distinguished education, and great property giving up everything at the threshold of a brilliant career has few finer parallels in the history of the early church. However, he did not part with all of his wealth at once, for he would need considerable means for the travels upon which he soon embarked and for the charities which he practiced throughout life.[1] It was probably before his departure for Egypt that he was baptized and shortly thereafter ordained to the office of reader by his revered friend, Dianius, bishop of Caesarea.[2] Thus did the influences of his first education come to decisive expression over those which he had experienced at Athens.[3]

Travels Investigating Asceticism. Basil now departed to seek first-hand knowledge of the ascetic way of life, to study its rules of governance and its modes of organization. In spite of precarious health and the laboriousness of ancient travel he covered a considerable part of the Near

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[1] Thus in Contra Eunomium I:10/P.G.XLV:281C, Greg. Nys. describes Basil as "one who ungrudgingly spent upon the poor his patrimony even before he was a priest, and most of all in the time of the famine [in 368]...; and afterward did not hoard even what remained to him." Furthermore, the Nazianzan tells us that at the time of the famine Basil was aided by "his own servants" (Orat. XLIII:35).

A more or less superficial treatise on The Attitude of St. Basil the Great toward Property Rights by W. Tilley (master's thesis, Univ. of Chicago, 1915) issues in the conclusion that Basil was "unsparing and uncompromising in his denunciation, not of the right of private ownership, but of the avarice and greed and usurpation of the wealthy landed proprietors who recognized no duty of ownership" (unpaged; quotation found in chap. I at n. 49). This conclusion is consonant with Homs. VI, VII, and VIII, all of which are directed against wealth--or rather against its abuse; for though Basil believed that the realization of the perfect Christian ideal necessitates the renouncement of the goods of the world, he does not demand that all make themselves monks and does not condemn the exercise of the right of property in practice any more than does Chrysostom (Puech, op. cit., III, 266). Cf. R. fus. VIII and IX, and Allard, Saint Basile[7], pp. 44 f.

[2] De Spir. Sanc., XXIX:71/60C.

[3] Puech, op. cit., III, 240.

East. His journeys must have consumed a little over a year, for he was back in Caesarea in 358, having returned in all likelihood during the summer. Few details of his travels are preserved. He states that he made his way to Egypt via Syria in a troublous and wearisome journey, and that he tarried at Alexandria[1] before traversing "the rest of Egypt."[2] On his return trip he evidently proceeded by way of Palestine, Coele-syria, and Mesopotamia.[3] However, there is no doubt that Basil was profoundly impressed by the lives of the ascetics in these places. "I admired their continence in living, and their endurance in toil; I was amazed at their persistency in prayer, and at their triumphing over sleep; subdued by no natural necessity, ever keeping their souls' purpose high and free, in hunger, in thirst, in cold, in scanty raiment, they never yielded to the body; they were never willing to waste attention on it; always, as though living in a flesh that was not theirs, they showed in very deed what it is to sojourn for a while in this life, and what to have one's citizenship and home in heaven. All this moved my admiration. I called the life of these men blessed in that they did in deed show that they 'bear about in their body the dying of Jesus.' And I prayed that I, too, as far as in me lay, might imitate them."[4]

There is no evidence that the essentially eremetic Antonian monasticism of Lower Egypt exerted any influence on Basil, although he must have

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[1] Ep. I:1/70B. Basil flatters the philosopher Eustathius by describing his journeys as motivated by the desire to see the pagan savant. Although he failed in this, it would seem that his long friendship with Eusebius of Samosata began during this tour.

[2] Ep. CCXXIII:2/337D.

[3] Ibid.

[4] Ibid., 337DE.

visited the extensive settlements nearby in connection with his stay at Alexandria.[1] Nor does the anchoritic conception which characterized the lands through which he probably passed on his homeward journey seem to have left any mark upon him. Rather, it is decidedly from the Pachomian form that Basil derived the features of his system. Pachomius had died only about eleven years prior to Basil's visit after having founded a predominantly cenobitic organization and rule at Tabennisi on the Nile. He had begun his ascetic life as an anchorite, and although the coming of disciples led him to establish a community, the spirit of his system seems to have remained thoroughly individualistic and basically foreign to the true genius of social asceticism. Hence in spite of Basil's indebtedness to Pachomius, his emphasis upon the advantages of the communal life in no way derives from Egypt. If his cenobitic system was not his own, it was probably one of many elements that he obtained from the noted Christian ascetic, Eustathius. In him Basil seems to have found the answer to his quest. Notwithstanding the doctrinal duplicity which beclouds the name of Eustathius, he was one of the great exemplars of the ascetic life in his day and the founder of monastic institutions in Lesser Armenia, Paphlagonia, and Pontus.[2] By 357 he had become bishop of Sebaste, a city which is said to have been the _patris_ of Basil's forbears.[3] Thus Basil may well have met Eustathius before entering upon his travels. It is certain that upon his

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[1] This paragraph follows Clarke, _St Basil the Great: A Study in Monasticism_ (Cambridge: University Press, 1913), pp. 26-47. But cf. Dom J. Gribomont, "Obéissance et évangile selon saint Basile le grand," _La vie spirituelle--Supplément_, No. 21 (May, 1952), 193.

[2] Sozomen, _H.E._, III,14.

[3] Greg. Nys. _Orat. in XL Mart._ is cited as supplying this information.

return he became a disciple of the paradoxical Cappadocian, and it seems that it was from him that Basil received "the last and most fruitful of the lessons he took in asceticism."[1] It remained for Basil to rid the Eustathian system of certain excesses, and in this consideration we undoubtedly have an important assertion of Basil's originality and as such an earnest of the remarkably creative impress which he was to leave upon the establishment of monasticism as a whole. According to Clarke his great contribution consisted in the fact that, as Gregory tells us, he instituted a middle way between the anchoritic and cenobitic extremes, combining the excellences of both. But even more extraordinary was the singularly biblical expression which Basil gave to monasticism. Whatever else it was or was not, his system was above all scriptural. This bibliocentricity is its most distinctive characteristic and undoubtedly its most interesting, especially for us.

Basil's apochōrēsis. Basil lost no time in applying the results of his investigations. His first thought was to obtain the comradeship of his friend Gregory in the fulfillment of their Athenian vow. When the latter demurred out of a sense of responsibility to his aged parents, Basil ven-

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[1] Clarke, St Basil the Great, p. 47; cf. pp. 159-62. Sozomen (H.E. III,14) cites a tradition that even attributed to Eustathius the authorship of the askētikē biblos associated with Basil. Certainly in these early years Eustathius seems to have been a man after Basil's own heart. He was a frequent visitor at the Pontic retreat (Ep. CCXXIII:5). The disintegration of their friendship after 372 is without doubt mostly a reflection upon the make-up of Eustathius. But despite the shiftiness and even craftiness of this enigmatical figure, he may not have been as black as he has been painted: so F. Loofs, Eustathius von Sebaste ... (Halle, 1898; cf. F. Zucchetti, "Eustazio di Sebaste e Basilio di Cesarea," Richerche Religiose, II [1926], 17-22); his personal character is unimpeachable. From Basil's standpoint there is poetic justice if not providence in the fact that on the death or deposition of Eustathius about 380, Basil's youngest brother Peter became bishop of Sebaste.

tured a start in the ascetic life at Tiberina, the district in the diocese of Nazianzus where Gregory's home, the estate Arianzus, was located.[1] The experiment was short-lived, however, for Basil found the place cold and damp and forbidding, a virtual mudhole--not to mention its bears and wolves.[2] He now returned to a spot in the diocese of Ibora across the Iris from his ancestral home at Annesi, a location which in all likelihood had already impressed him as an ideal one for his retreat.[3] Though the solitude of the site appealed to him as much as its beauty, Basil's endeavor was by no means made in complete isolation. With the family grown and the cares of worldly life at a minimum, Macrina had for some time been leading her mother and the entire household of female domestics toward "the high mark of philosophy" when the tragic death of Naucratius precipitated her full commitment to the ascetic life. With the women slaves and servants as a nucleus, the estate at Annesi was turned into a sisterhood which soon attracted other devout ladies and young maidens, some of high rank. All distinctions were abolished. Here Macrina led her associates in an "unceasing round of prayer and endless hymnody co-extensive with time itself, practiced night and day." Here she nursed and reared infants picked up by the roadside where they had been exposed in time of famine. Here Emmelia erected a chapel in honor of the Forty Martyrs of Sebaste, to which their relics were translated. It was on the other side of the river--very likely

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[1] Greg. Naz., Ep. I. Cf. W. M. Ramsay, "Basil of Caesareia," Expositor, 5th ser., III (1896), 59, n. 2.

[2] Greg. Naz., Ep. II; Basil, Ep. XIV.

[3] Basil's enraptured description of its beauties in Ep. XIV reveals a highly developed appreciation of nature and anticipates the talent displayed in his Hexaemeron.

also a part of the family estate--that Basil now instituted a similar pursuit of the ascetic life.[1] As in the case of the nascent convent opposite, devotees from among the numerous, unorganized ascetics in the region were not long in gathering around Basil, and his hermitage soon took on the aspect of a koinobion. Before long Gregory of Nazianzus joined the brotherhood in the first of what were evidently several sojourns,[2] and was in turn partly responsible for leading Basil's brother Gregory into the fold later on.

Not only does it appear that Gregory's obligations made his residence at the Pontic retreat far from continuous, but the stay of Basil himself was by no means uninterrupted during the years which are associated with his retirement--358 to 365. Thus late in 359, now a deacon, he departed his "contemplative" abode to accompany Basil of Ancyra and Eustathius of Sebaste to the Council of Constantinople in 360. When Constantius attempted to force the council to sign the Creed of Ariminum, Basil seems to have left in disgust for Caesarea. Learning while here that Dianius had subscribed to the Arianizing creed, he dejectedly sought the companionship of Gregory of Nazianzus--this was in 361. The next year he was again present at Caesarea to receive the dying protestation of the aged bishop that in the simplicity of his heart he had agreed to the document sent from Con-

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[1] Sir W. M. Ramsay (Hist. Geog., p. 327) fixes the locale with fair certainty as "the rocky glen below Turkhal:" cf. supra, p. 6, n. 6.

There was evidently considerable mutuality between the men's and women's establishments. Basil speaks of being in constant communion with his mother and each group seems to have contributed to the other's needs. Cf. Pachomius and his sister Mary.

[2] In Eps. IV and V he taunts Basil with a description of the Pontic retreat which answers to Basil's opinion of Tiberina, but takes it all back and then some in Ep. VI. According to Giet (Sasimes ..., p. 38, n. 1), the order of the correspondence which relates to this period is: Greg. I, Bas. XIV, Greg. II, Bas. II, and Greg. IV, V, and VI.

stantinople.[1] Basil seems to have remained to play a considerable part in the tumultuous election of Eusebius, by whom he was probably ordained to the priesthood about this time.[2] It was only when the jealousy of Eusebius was manifested and the rallying of the Caesarean monks around "their chief" threatened an actual schism that Basil took Gregory's advice and accompanied him back to their rustic retreat.[3] But again Basil's monastic peace was interrupted when in 365 the frightening approach of Valens confronted the orthodox in Caesarea with a new crisis and Basil was recalled to the side of Eusebius--thanks again to the mediation of Gregory of Nazianzus. From then on, and especially after he succeeded Eusebius in the episcopate in 370, he knew the blissful seclusion of his Pontic refuge only now and then.[4] Basil's ascetic withdrawal therefore falls into two parts, "the first lasting a little over a year (358-359) and ending with his departure to Constantinople, the second part (362-365) beginning with his flight from Caesarea to avoid a strife with Eusebius and ending with his return at the time of Valens' visit."[5]

The Philocalia. "Trace back the lives of the men of action some few degrees, and it may be found that the current and direction was given to

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[1] Ep. LI:2/144B.

[2] J. Schäfer in his Basilius des Grossen Beziehungen zum Abendlande (Münster, 1909) argues cogently for the year 362, which Giet, Clarke, etc. accept; Maran, Jackson, Allard, and others place Basil's presbyterate in 364.

[3] Greg. Naz., Orat. XLIII:28-9.

[4] Cf. Ep. CCX:1/313E. As a part of the "new city" he built outside Caesarea, Basil established a famous cenobium and followed the ascetic life as far as possible during his episcopacy; in fact, he is generally agreed to be the founder of organized monasticism in Cappadocia. Rufinus describes other and later travels of Basil as a missionary in behalf of asceticism.

[5] Clarke, St Basil the Great, p. 52.

them out of some quiet study." Plato's words have especial application to Basil and his ascetic sojourn on the banks of the Iris. Here it was that as a young man of about thirty he first indulged his fancy for what were to him the satisfactions of the monastic life. Here the waxen tablet was smoothed in preparation for the writing.[1] The seven or so years he spent more or less in monastic withdrawal were in the deepest sense formative, and constitute for him an experience similar to the wilderness wandering of Israel in which the soul finds itself. Central to this disciplining and development of his inner life were prayer, devotion, Scripture reading, manual labor, and attendance on the sick.[2] But busy as Basil and Gregory must have been with these claims, they found time in their scant leisure for study, and the opportunity thus afforded was not wasted. It was largely in this way that they shaped the theological ideas and acquired that extraordinary knowledge of the Scriptures which their writings reveal. In addition to their intense preoccupation with the Bible, they were able to accomplish some important literary work. For though Basil's use of the Scriptures was intensely practical, he also approached them as a student. This he did not do simply "in the presumption of his own thoughts" but with diligent attention to the writings of interpreters who had labored in the Divine Oracles before him. Chief among these was Origen, the most provocative Christian thinker of his day and the most stimulating writer upon biblical subjects available for a long time afterward.

In ancient times as well as modern the gathering of extracts or select bits of a writer in what we call an anthology, the ancients an eklogē, has

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[1] Ep. II:2.

[2] Ep. II:2-6; Greg. Naz., Orat. XLIII:61.

been a favorite literary mode and an important means of preserving and transmitting an author. Using this device, Basil and Gregory seem to have devoted their community of scholarship to drawing up a compilation of selected passages from the works of Origen to which they gave the significant name of "Philocalia." It was probably produced during the earlier monastic retirement (358-9).[1] The collection is a well-ordered and representative body of extracts arranged in twenty-seven chapters, the first thirteen devoted primarily to scriptural concerns and the remainder to such themes as free will and fate. It is of unique value to the student as an introduction to Origen and as a repository of many choice passages which otherwise would have perished or have been preserved only in a translation of ques-

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[1] Critical ed., J. A. Robinson (Cambridge, 1893); Eng. trans., G. Lewis (Edinburgh, 1911). In the succeeding pages the latter's translation is followed, with negligible changes.

Though the consensus is quite unanimous that the Philocalia dates from this period, F. Loofs (Protestantische Realenzyklopadie, 3rd., VII, 141f.) doubts it. Cf. O. Bardenhewer, Geschichte der altkirchlichen Litteratur, III, 132, n. 2.

In the opinion of Dom Jean Gribomont, the Philocalia is "chiefly the work of Gregory, and does not answer to the interests to which Basil later returned" (personal letter dated March 24, 1952). Cf. Ep. CXV of Greg. Naz., in which he transmits a copy of the Philocalia to Theodore of Tyana about 382. Dom Gribomont, with whom I have had some little private correspondence, is a Benedictine scholar of Clervaux whose critical edition of the Ascetica is due off the presses early in 1953. The definitive nature of his work seems assured by the thorough and competent investigation of the MSS which he has evidently undertaken. In a letter dated April 25, 1952, the Benedictine enlarges upon his position respecting the Philocalia: "As a literary form, the part due to the compilers--the titles announcing the extracts--is absolutely in the same style as the Morals: 'oti' so and so. What makes me believe that it was Gregory who made the choice is that I find no trace of the interest which determines this choice in Basil's work. Without having a profound personal knowledge of the work of Gregory, I believe I can say that in it one will discover the same preoccupations as in the Phil. much more frequently. Whereas I have read the latter from cover to cover in the hope of finding therein the key to certain attitudes or references implicit in Basil, I have found nothing in common. Basil's part would be at most in the composition of the titles." Offhand it would seem that this novel suggestion presents a rather strange concept of the editorial liaison between Basil and Gregory.

tionable worth. The title "Love of the Beautiful" is itself revealing, for it attests the enthusiastic admiration of the two Cappadocians for the celebrated Alexandrian. But though Basil's admiration for the master was fervent, it was by no means blind. There is no doubt that in the domain of theological and speculative thought Basil must be counted among the disciples of the Alexandrian. But while he was a convinced Origenist, he nevertheless preserved a striking liberty of spirit. This is particularly true when it comes to the Bible. Again, the zeal with which the two friends must have set themselves to struggle with the vast erudition and output of the great doctor shows that a mood of considerable intellectual adventure characterized their retreat. Thus they included in their compilation extracts from the third book and almost the whole of the fourth book of the treatise On Principles, the most complete and characteristic expression of Origen's opinion and a work which was already becoming suspect as the most dangerous of all the writings of the future heretic.

It is not merely that Basil's consuming biblical interest is undoubtedly mirrored in the selection of passages which he and Gregory made; this material must have taken root in his mind almost as firmly as it attached itself to the substance on which it was transcribed. Through what may have been months of investigation, discussion, and tedious copying, he and Gregory were responsible for producing a fascinating handbook from the works of their teacher. What concerns especially engrossed them? They began with a rather long passage which proffers "a few brief remarks" on the inspiration of Scripture. At the outset Origen invites us "with the help of reason to confirm our faith." The astonishing spread of the Mosaic Law and the Christian Gospel throughout the world and the equally marvelous fulfillment of

Old Testament prophecy in Jesus Christ are both undeniable portents of the divinity of the Scriptures. The sacred books "were written and have come to us by inspiration of the Holy Spirit, according to the will of the Father of all through Jesus Christ" (Philoc. I:9). "And it is fitting to believe," as Origen points out later (I:28), "that not a single tittle of the Sacred Scriptures is without something of the wisdom of God; for he who gave me--a mere man--the command, 'Thou shalt not appear before me empty,' how much more will He not speak anything 'empty'." These words furnish a hint as to the way to read and understand the Scriptures (I:8); however, it is first pointed out that great harm has resulted in the case of obscure or perplexing passages because "the Scripture on the spiritual side is not understood, but is taken in the bare literal sense" (I:9). The formula for a sound exegesis Origen finds in Prov. 22:20-21, which he quotes to this effect (I:11):

> "Do thou thrice record them with counsel and knowledge that thou mayest answer with words of truth to those who try thee with hard questions." A man ought then in three ways to record in his own soul the purposes of the Holy Scriptures; that the simple may be edified by, as it were, the flesh of Scripture (for thus we designate the primary sense), the more advanced by its soul, and the perfect by the spiritual law, which has a shadow of the good things to come. ... As man consists of body, soul, and spirit, so too does Scripture, which has been granted for the salvation of men.

It is true that the multitudes of true and simple-minded believers profit only by the primary scriptural sense, while "the aim of the Spirit ... was chiefly directed to the unspeakable mysteries connected with men--and by 'men' I mean 'embodied souls'..." (I:14). Wherefore anyone can attain to these mysteries who is educable and who will strive to fathom their depths. Difficulties and obscurities in the Scriptures are thus only apparent, not real. If the reader runs afoul of such obstacles, let him blame himself.

It is foolish to suppose that the early chapters of Genesis, for instance, merely detail literal history: they "figuratively reveal certain mysteries" (I:17). This is not to say that no history is real and that no part of the Law or the Gospel is to be observed literally, "though among more eager students it is possible to treasure every detail as the deep wisdom of God without rejecting the literal meaning of the command" (I:20). Where the reader is confused on this score he must follow "the Saviour's injunction to search the Scriptures":[1]

> [He must] carefully examine where the literal meaning is true, and where it cannot possibly be so; and he must, to the best of his ability, by comparing parallel passages scattered up and down Scripture, trace out the prevalent sense of what is literally impossible. Since, then, as will be clear to readers, the literal connection is impossible, while the main connection is not impossible but even true, we must strive to grasp the general sense which intelligibly connects things literally impossible with such things as are not only not impossible, but are historically true--such things also being capable of allegorical interpretation no less than those which never literally occurred. For, regarding the whole of Divine Scripture, we hold that every portion has the spiritual meaning but not every portion the corporeal; for the corporeal meaning is often proved to be impossible. The cautious reader must therefore very carefully bear in mind that the divine books are divine writings, and that there appears to be a peculiar way of understanding them, which I will now describe. (I:21.)

This is done by pointing out that Paul differentiates between the "bodily race of Jews" and "those who are Jews inwardly." "Now let me ask," Origen

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[1] How far back does this perverse rendering of ereunate in John 5:39 as an imperative instead of an indicative go? There are at least two instances of it in the Philocalia, here and in V:5, one in Gregory of Nyssa, In Eccles., Hom. I (P.G. XLIV/617C), etc. Origen was a discerning, Greek-speaking scholar who prided himself on distinguishing "language, meaning, and things on which meaning is based." How then could he fail to observe the unmistakable indications in both text and context that the indicative must be meant? He must have uncritically or for edificatory purposes carried over a misinterpretation which had long since become stereotyped. Or is this a popular, rhetorical, or derisive use of the imperative such as, "Go on searching the Scriptures..."? In any case the Fathers generally seem to have taken the verb as an imperative, and their feeling must at least be acknowledged pending a full investigation.

questions, "do not such great prophecies written on their behalf, inasmuch as in the literal sense they are trivial and exhibit none of the lofty dignity of a promise made by God, require a mystical interpretation? And if the promises are spiritual, though expressed by means of things sensible, they also to whom the promises are given are not 'corporeal'" (I:22). And just as there are "spiritual" Israelites, there are "spiritual" Egyptians and Babylonians.

> Let us consider then whether the obvious in Scripture, its superficial and easy meaning, is not like a field covered with all sorts of growths; while the secret things, not seen by all but as it were buried beneath the things that are seen, are the hidden treasures of wisdom and knowledge, which the Spirit by the mouth of Esaias calls "dark," "invisible," "concealed." They must be found out, though God alone can break in pieces the gates of brass which hide them.... (I:27.)

The first chapter of the Philocalia concludes with three short extracts from Origen bearing on the preceding discussion and ending with these words from the fifth homily on Leviticus:

> Seeing then that the Scripture itself consists as it were of a body which is seen, and of a soul therein apprehended by the reason, and of a spirit which corresponds to the copies and shadow of heavenly things, let us call upon Him who created Scripture with a body, soul, and spirit--the body for those who were before us, the soul for us, and the spirit for those who in the coming age shall inherit eternal life and are destined to reach the heavenly, archetypal things contained in the Law; and then let us search, not for the letter, but for the soul of what we are considering. Then, if we are able, we will ascend also to the spirit, corresponding to the principles involved in the sacrifices of which we read.[1]

A series of generally shorter extracts, mostly from Origen's exegetical works and the Contra Celsum, makes up the succeeding chapters. In chap. II:2 the Divine Scriptures are referred to as being "beyond question full of riddles and parables and dark sayings and various other obscurities

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[1] Cf. H. de Lubac, Histoire et esprit (Paris: Aubier, 1950), for a discussion of "L'intelligence de l'Écriture d'après Origène."

hard to be understood," and stress is laid on the consideration that the Holy Spirit has dictated the words of the Lord through the ministers of the Word with the most scrupulous accuracy, "lest the parallel meaning which the wisdom of God had constantly in view over the whole range of inspired Scripture, even to the mere letter, should escape us" (II:4). The brief chap. IV concludes with this simple rationale of the solecisms and poverty of style in Holy Writ: "Had the Scripture been embellished with elegance of style and diction, like the masterpieces of Greek literature, one might perhaps have supposed that it was not the truth which got hold of men, but that the clear sequence of thought and the beauty of the language won the souls of the hearers and caught them with guile." The next chapter affirms the unity of the Scriptures and of the Gospels, and contains the significant observation that in investigating Scripture a person should "not hastily claim to understand the meaning because he grasps the literal sense" (V:2). Moreover, as the following chapter declares, "harmony and concord exist, whether between the Old and the New [Scriptures], or the Law and the Prophets, or Gospel and Gospel, or Evangelists and Apostles, or Apostles and other Apostles" (VI:1). Like the different notes of a lyre which combine to create a harmony, "the whole Scripture is the one, perfect, harmonious instrument of God, blending the different notes, for those who wish to learn, into one song of salvation" (VI:2). In chap. VIII Origen resolves an instance of solecism in Hosea by recourse to the hidden meaning of the passage. He next points out (chap. IX:3) the harm and confusion which arise from the supposition that a word must have a single consistent meaning wherever it is found: "speaking generally, we ought to be aware that inasmuch as the purpose of the Spirit in the prophets, and the Word in

the apostles of Christ, is to conceal and not plainly disclose the thoughts of the truth, confusion arises again and again through the mere wording, and no close sequence of thought is preserved; the object being that even the unworthy may not to the judgment of their own soul discover the things which are thus for their good concealed from them." The stumbling-blocks and perplexities of Scripture must be approached from the standpoint that "there is not one jot or tittle written in the Scripture which does not work its own work when men know how to extract the virtue." Thus enunciated in chap. X:1, the same general theme is continued in the next two brief extracts, issuing in the consideration that even when we do not understand Scripture our faculties are nonetheless nourished and strengthened by reading it. In chap. XIII, which is the letter to Gregory Thaumaturgus dealt with below, Origen delivers himself on the relationship of Christianity and philosophy:

> I am therefore very desirous that you should accept such parts even of Greek philosophy as may serve for the ordinary elementary instruction of our schools, and be a kind of preparation for Christianity; also those portions of geometry and astronomy likely to be of use in the interpretation of the sacred Scriptures, so that what the pupils of the philosophers say about geometry and music, grammar, rhetoric, and astronomy, viz. that they are the handmaidens of philosophy, we may say of philosophy itself in relation to Christianity.

The central thought in chap. XIV is the vanity of determining "the exact meaning of words in different languages" and of "carefully attending to things signified," when sometimes the cause of our falling into great errors is our "ignorance of logic" and our failure to "clear up the equivocal senses, ambiguities, misapplications, literal meanings, and distinctions." In the extract which constitutes chap. XV Origen replies to those who suppose that "a given statement is by reason of the beauty of Greek phraseol-

ogy of necessity better than what is expressed with less elegance and in simpler terms by Jewish or Christian authors" (XV:8). Whereas Plato and his imitators with their elegant style have benefitted but few, the humble diction of Scripture with its direct and practical aim and its concern for the needs of the greater number has benefitted many. Even so the efficacy of Holy Writ depends upon a certain unction in the speaker and in the hearer: on the one hand the Divine Word "is not of itself sufficient to reach man's soul unless a certain power from God be given to the speaker," and on the other the hearer profits in proportion as his will inclines to receive the blessing (XV:4). The investigation of the deep things of God has been left for those "who can put themselves into God's hands as did the saints to whom God appeared, for he was seen, not with their bodily eyes, but with the pure heart" (XV:6). Isaiah gives an "exact description" of the physical features of Jesus which is somewhat unfavorable, but this must be balanced against Psalm 45, which speaks of our Lord's grace and beauty (XV:12). Origen continues this discussion at some length, but suffice it to say that (in his own words) "we do not invite intelligent readers to a bare unreasoning faith, but we wish to show that future readers will have to exercise prudence and make careful inquiry, and, so to speak, penetrate the very heart of the writers if the exact purport of every passage is to be discovered."[1]

The remainder of the Philocalia is not primarily occupied with scrip-

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[1] Philoc. XV:15. Par. 18 contains a rather interesting exegetical reference to the crux interpretum centering in Matt. 16:18, Origen speaking of "a Peter making room for the building of the church within him through the Word, gaining such strength of character that no gate of hell shall prevail against him."

tural concerns, although it includes points which are further indicative of the type of biblical exegesis on which Basil was mainly if not exclusively brought up. The latter part of the florilegium is largely given over to selections in which Origen upholds the freedom of the will against the insistence of Celsus upon necessity as the ruling factor in human affairs. At one place in the course of these discussions the Alexandrian makes this point: "That God knows every detail of the future long in advance is, apart from Scripture, from the very conception of God clear to him who understands the power and excellence of the divine understanding. If however we must prove this from the Scriptures, the prophecies are full of suitable illustrations; and, according to Susanna, God knows all things before they be..." (XXIII:4). In short, prophecy is prediction, and Origen proceeds to give instances of its literal fulfillment. Josiah, his name and his acts, were "prophetically described [in I Kings 12:32ff.] many years before the events took place" (XXIII:4). Isaiah, "who lived long before the Babylonish Captivity," yet prophesied of the Persian monarch Cyrus who reigned centuries later. Comparable to Isaiah on this score is Daniel (XXIII:4). And the abundant prophecies concerning Christ need no mention; thus in Ps. 108 the Psalmist speaks "in the person of Christ" and Judas is foreknown both as the betrayer and as the cause of the betrayal. Origen presses this line of argument to destroy the contention of Celsus that the foreknowledge of God is the cause of future events, so that a prediction comes to pass simply because the event was predicted; rather, "the prophet is not the cause of the future event because he foretells its occurrence, but ... the future event, which would happen even if it were not predicted, is the cause of his foretelling it who has the foreknowledge" (XXIII:12).

Origen Mediated to Basil through Gregory Thaumaturgus. Such was not only the mode of biblical exegesis with which Basil seems to have been concerned in his apochōrēsis; it was also the type on which he had been brought up. For his acquaintance with Origen grew out of far longer and deeper roots than his ascetic retreat. One of the notable chapters in the Philocalia is a letter of Origen to Gregory Thaumaturgus. As noted earlier, Basil's grandmother Macrina had nurtured him almost from the cradle on the Origenistic tradition in the person of this Gregory. Macrina herself had been trained as a disciple of the Wonder-worker by those who in all likelihood had been converted by him or at any rate had been his personal followers.[1] Her faith had that deep fervor which is both the cause and the result of persecution, and its glow was transmitted to the little boy as soon as he possessed understanding. He must have listened with rapt attention to many a recital of the marvels attributed to the Thaumaturgist. Likewise, the grandmother's vivid accounts of her own adventurous years of exile in the hill forests of Pontus would kindle in him strong emotions, and Macrina seems to have used them skillfully to implant the doctrines and precepts of Gregory in the sensitive and alert young mind. The teachings of "the great Gregory" were a veritable catechism for the grandson, the rule by which his faith was "fashioned and formed."[2] Oblique witness to the force of this instruction is provided by the fact that it was especially from the oral tradition of the elder Macrina that her other grandson Gregory seems to have procured the materials for his florid biography of the Thaumaturgist. The Wonder-worker was a remarkable person, combining a

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1 Ep. CCIV:6.

2 Ibid., and Ep. CCXXIII:3.

lowly spirit, scholarly mind, and exalted character with a sound practical bent and a love of human nature. All of these gifts were employed in his indefatigable labors as the first bishop of Pontic Neo-Caesarea, his birthplace, and as the pioneer missionary of much of Asia Minor (ca. 245-65). It is said that when he came to the diocese there were only seventeen Christians in the whole area; when he left, there were but seventeen who were not Christians. Born probably Theodorus of heathen parents about 210, he and his brother Athenodorus chanced to come under the influence of Origen at Palestinian Caesarea about 233/4 and found both the man and his message irresistible. The result was that the two brothers remained to sit at the master's feet for five years,[1] during which Theodorus the pupil became Gregory the Christian convert. His admiration for his teacher is enshrined in a moving panegyric composed and probably delivered as a farewell address before he departed the "Paradise" about 239. Equally celebrated is the letter of reply which Origen sent his "most excellent and reverend son" almost as soon as the latter reached Neo-Caesarea--this is the one which appears in the Philocalia as chap. XIII.[2] Either the letter, the plaudits of the populace on his arrival home, or the efforts of the bishop of Amasea to consecrate the promising young man to the bishopric led Gregory to retire into the wilderness. He was elected and ordained anyway in absentia, and

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[1] Eusebius, H.E. VI,30. But cf. W. Metcalfe, Gregory Thaumaturgus: Address to Origen ("Translations of Christian Literature"; New York: Macmillan Co., 1920), pp. 34-36, who holds that the eight years mentioned by Gregory at the start of the Address were spent under Origen, so that the two brothers met the Alexandrian refugee almost immediately upon his arrival at Caesarea in late 231 or early 232.

[2] Metcalfe (op. cit., pp. 36-40) follows J. Dräseke ("Der Brief des Origenes an Gregorios von Neocäsarea," Jahrbücher für Protestantische Theologie, VII [1881], 102-26) in denying that the letter is an answer to the Address and in dating it from the Maximinian persecution, 235-37.

thus began the renowned episcopal and missionary career, the brilliant success of which is reflected in the bizarre and incredible legends which gathered about his person and procured for him the title of Wonder-worker.[1] The solid core of achievement which inspired this thaumaturgic literature is perhaps better attested by the quantity of spurious writings which sought the sanction of his name. Actually the only important authentic work of Gregory is the encomium on Origen, to whose personality and writings it serves as a graphic introduction. In addition to including Origen's reply in the Philocalia, Basil in his letters appeals to the example and words of "the great Gregory" on several occasions (CCIV:2; CCVII:4; and CCX:3,5) and extols him as "the first founder" (XXVIII:1) and "great champion" (XXVIII:2) of the Neo-Caesarean church. The De Spiritu Sancto (XXIX:74) contains an extended panegyric reference to Gregory.

Basil was the successor to Gregory Thaumaturgus in truth and in spirit. Just as Basil followed Gregory in the episcopate over a century later, so he seems to have followed him somewhat in the closeness and qualities of his discipleship of Origen.[2] As a matter of fact certain reactions of Gregory to Origen as expressed in the panegyric have overtones which echo clearly in the mind of Basil in his day. For instance, Basil in his retreat seems to have known the experience of Gregory when the latter says of his student days with Origen, "How pleasantly I lived, hearing the master

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[1] The aura of the legendary and marvelous which surrounds the name of Gregory cannot be entirely discounted, for Jerome and Theodoret join with Basil and the Nyssenian in recognizing him as "a man of apostolic signs and wonders" (H. Reynolds in DCB, II, 730b, quoting J. H. Newman).

[2] In Ep. CCXXXVI:1/360E Basil refers to "those things which we have heard from the fathers since boyhood and through our love for things noble have accepted without question."

speak, yet silent."[1] Again, Gregory remarks how Origen laid stress on "the chief of our endowments, namely reason"--"he used to declare, and that truly, that true religion was utterly impossible to one who did not philosophize."[2] Gregory may be said to speak for Basil as well when he says of Origen that "he established a reasonable, in place of an unreasoning, wonder in our souls."[3] "Moreover, he did not accustom us to the current doctrine that wisdom was the mere knowledge of things good and evil, or of things to be or not to be done--a vain and unprofitable study this, if the argument were divorced from action, and wisdom did not do the things which ought to be done and turn aside from the things which ought not to be done."[4] Basil's conception of the work of the Holy Spirit as being as essential to the reading as to the writing of Scripture is strikingly paralleled by the statement in the panegyric that "the same power is requisite both to those who give utterance and to those who give ear to prophecies; one would not hear a prophet except the very Spirit which prophesied had bestowed upon him the understanding of its words."[5] In the letter to Gregory Thaumaturgus which is included in the Philocalia, Origen enunciates a favorite Basilian theme in the subserviency of philosophy to Scripture, inveighing against those who"with a certain Greek smartness ... as it were fashion golden heifers in Bethel" (Philoc. XIII:3). Basil indeed outstripped the Alexandrian in the seriousness with which he took the latter's

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[1] Gregory Thaumaturgus, Address to Origen, par. XVI. Metcalfe's translation is followed.

[2] Ibid., par. VI.

[3] Ibid., par. VIII.

[4] Ibid., par. IX.

[5] Ibid., par. XV.

advice to give "great attention in reading the Scriptures, that we may not speak or think too rashly about them" (ibid., 4). Bearing in mind Origen's allegorical excesses, we may fairly hear Basil murmuring, "Physician, heal thyself," when he finds Origen attacking those who "have set up their own inventions in the Scriptures" (ibid., 3).

The Bibliocentricity of the Ascetica. We have seen that in its conception and in its execution Basil's ascetic mode might be described as biblical monasticism. The predominant feature of his system was his thoroughgoing use of the Bible as the sole and simple regula of the cenobium. Although he was to draw up two sets of regulations which have taken the names Longer and Shorter Rules, the Bible itself is the rule par excellence. The emergence of the Scriptures and particularly of the New Testament as the dominating factor in his ascetic thought and practice can early be traced. Already in Ep. II:3 at the start of the first ascetic period (ca. 358) "the study of inspired Scripture" is set forth as "the chief way of finding our duty." The Bible is a virtual casket of medicaments for all spiritual ills. Prayer too gains in freshness and vigor "after reading." The biblical emphasis is even stronger toward the beginning of the second monastic period (ca. 363), when Basil wrote Ep. XXII.[1] He has meanwhile organized the cenobitic life for his monks and has drawn up some written prescriptions, but his charges seek additional advice on various matters. Basil proceeds to lay down the duties of "the Christian," who for him is of course preeminently the ascetic. In his answer he strikes the biblical note at the very outset. "Many things are set forth by inspired Scripture

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[1] "Letter 22 is to be classed among the Ascetica...": Dom J. Gribomont, personal letter under date of March 24, 1952.

as binding upon all who are anxious to please God. But for the present I have only deemed it necessary to speak by way of brief reminder concerning the questions which have recently been stirred among you, so far as I have learned from the study of inspired Scripture itself."[1] Whereas the earlier Ep. II dealt with Scripture along with other matters and applied it only in the general sense of holding up Joseph, Job, David, and Moses for imitation, Ep. XXII is practically one long series of indirect biblical quotations or proof-texts applied to the regulation of the details of everyday life in the community. At least sixty scriptural passages are invoked or echoed. They are used in a straightforward, literal manner, no issues of a theological or controversial nature being involved. The parallels between these two letters and the Rules are manifold. Clarke feels that in the words which follow the quotation last given (Ep. XXII:1/99A) Basil alludes to his intention of writing the Morals or the Longer Rules,[2] though it is difficult to see how the text can be made to yield this meaning. In any event the Morals have numerous affinities with Ep. XXII, and Clarke suggests that they may form an intermediate stage between the "written rules and canons"[3] drawn up earlier and the two Rules as we know them. In the MSS and editions the Ēthika or Moralia is prefaced by two rather short treatises seemingly in the nature of a double prologue, the Peri krimatos Theou and the Peri pisteōs, with which it forms a trilogy of undoubted genuineness.[4] Clarke dates the group in 363 or 364, maintaining that Basil

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[1] Ep. XXII:1.

[2] Clarke, The Ascetic Works ..., pp. 14, 15; St Basil ..., pp. 54, 64.

[3] Greg. Naz., Ep. VI.

[4] See Addendum B at the end of this chapter.

was clearly a priest when he wrote the Morals: "thus Rule lxx, dealing with the duties of the clergy, has 37 sub-divisions."[1] However, on the basis of his investigation of the MSS Dom J. Gribomont thinks that the Moralia (together with the De Judicio minus its final phrase, plus par. 6 of the De Fide) are thehoroi referred to by Gregory in Ep. VI; this ensemble was the first work of Basil and dates from the beginning of his retirement, or probably more specifically from the latter part of the first monastic period, 358-59.[2]

The Peri krimatos Theou, which is presented explicitly as an introduction to the Ēthika, opens with some valuable autobiographical mentions. These however are only introductory to the unfolding of the preliminary problem of the treatise--the appalling disorder and dissension in the church as exemplified currently by the Anomoean disturbance. The clue to the trouble Basil finds in Scripture, specifically that portion of the book of Judges which "tells how each did what was right in his own eyes and gives the reason by saying, 'In those days there was no king in Israel.'"[3] Likewise the rejection of "the one great true and only King and God of all" through disobedience is the reason for our present undoing. Order is heaven's first law, and the prevailing anarchy has one root cause--the lack of obedience or the absence of discipline. Whence Basil proceeds to a consideration of his main theme, the judgment of God on sin. "I find, then, when I take up the divine Scriptures, in the Old and New Testaments, that disobedience toward God is plainly judged to lie not in the multitude of

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[1] Clarke, The Ascetic Works ..., p. 16.

[2] Personal letter dated April 25, 1952.

[3] De Jud. 2/214C.

sins nor their magnitude, but in the mere transgression of any one command, and that there is a common judgment of God against all disobedience."[1] Basil presents his thesis in a manner which indicates long and intensive examination of the Scriptures, so much so that he is fairly overwhelmed with material: "if I would narrate all that I find in the Old and New Testament, time would soon fail me as I expounded it."[2] As it is, the De Judicio except for the introduction "contains scarcely anything but Scripture texts briefly commented upon."[3] First from the Old Testament (De Jud. 217B-219B) and then from the New (219B-222E) Basil marshals passages in proof-text fashion to underscore the absolute impartiality and inevitability of God's judgment on every sin: the breach of one commandment is the breach of all. "These and such things," he concludes, "I have learned in the God-inspired Scriptures by the grace of the good God.... And I have noticed the most horrible cause of the serious dissension of the many both with one another and with the commandments of the Lord, and have been instructed in that terrible judgment which is incurred by so great transgression, and taught that every disobedience of every decree of God is avenged in equal fashion."[4] The treatise ends with a statement of intention now to "expound the sound faith and godly tenets concerning the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and then add ta ēthika."

The projected doctrinal exposition on the Trinity we have in the De Fide. Actually however it is obvious that the opening of the treatise does

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[1] Ibid., 4/217D.

[2] Ibid., 8/221D.

[3] Puech, op. cit., III, 298.

[4] De Jud. 8/222E.

not logically follow upon the conclusion of the De Judicio: the tone changes, the persons for whom it is destined are not the same, and the relation of the author to the addressees is different. Maran dates the De Fide in 361, but there can be little doubt that it was not contained in the original edition of the Morals. Such is Gribomont's position, and Amand concurs that the material up to par. 6 (229C) was not written for inclusion in the premier collection of the Morals but was composed during Basil's episcopacy and introduced into it later. In any case Basil's announced purpose in the De Fide is "simply the confession and manifestation of the sound faith."[1] Whereas in his writings against the heretics (as in the Adversus Eunomium) he has used controversial language, in the present favorable circumstances he will confine himself to scriptural phraseology and shun all novelty. Yet even on this basis the finite vocabulary is quite insufficient to convey the infinite mysteries of the divine glory. Nevertheless, with the whole of Scripture in mind, he quotes a few names or titles which should prove sufficient "as both showing our views to be based on Scripture and convincing you yourselves of their truth."[2] An extended baptismal confession follows.[3] In general it proceeds along the lines of the Nicene Creed, but with the significant difference that scriptural phrases abound, so much so that Amand characterizes it as "completely made up of biblical terms and passages."[4] Next, somewhat as faith was emphasized in the beginning of the treatise, love is exalted in a brief discourse:

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[1] De Fide 2/225A.

[2] Ibid., 3/227A.

[3] Vide Clarke, The Ascetic Works ..., p. 95, n. 1.

[4] Amand, L'ascèse monastique ..., p. 81.

in both cases biblical texts are plentiful. The final portion of the De Fide (par. 6) is a direct introduction to the Moralia or gospel ethics. Basil declares his purpose has been to collect into summarized rules "as many things as we find forbidden or approved in scattered passages in the New Testament"--his original intention was to include the Old Testament also.[1] As the only work to which the author of the Ascetica himself gives the name horoi ("rules"), the "Moral Rules" are the regulae par excellence of Basil, his true rules; it is by error that this term has been extended in the later MSS to the so-called longer and shorter Rules, which are really in the nature of a commentary on the primary collection. The Ēthika are presented in the form of propositions to which were originally appended simple numerical references to the NT according to recognized divisions called kephalaia; the full passages were written out later, though presumably at an early date.[2] Although the rules are given as eighty in number, in most cases several related precepts are grouped together to form one rule. In fact, traces of an overall plan in the arrangement of the

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[1] De Fide 6/229D.

[2] Amand states (op. cit., p. 84, n. 143) that the full passages "are the work either of a reviser who may be very ancient and almost contemporary with Basil, or else of later copyists who wished to spare readers the trouble of running through the New Testament in the search for the kephalaia indicated." Significantly, "the manuscripts do not all accord in the extent [of use] of these citations (P.G. XXXI, 699, n. 55-56)." Amand foregoes further discussion of the nature of this system of divisions, but Dom Gribomont writes in a personal letter under date of January 1, 1952: "I point out to you, as interesting, a subject which I had planned to investigate later, but which I release to you'volontiers'. Basil announces, Patr. Gr. XXXI:692A, that in the 'Morals' ... he refers to the texts of the NT by numbers, which mention presupposes the use of an edition numbered throughout the NT, a precious division which has disappeared. The MSS give the biblical texts in extenso, but the Vatic. 413 at least--without doubt also the Athos Lavra 442--still gives in the margin the numbers of Basil, thanks to which it would be easy to reconstitute the division of his NT." I hope to devote myself to this task at another time.

material are not lacking. Puech senses instances in which the precept seems to have been formulated first and then its scriptural support adduced, and vice versa; the relationship between rules and texts is sometimes rather tenuous.[1]

Although, as we have seen, the primacy really rests with the "Moral Rules," the two monastic Rules known as the longer and the shorter have usually been considered the heart of the Ascetica.[2] This is probably because the code of monasticism in the Orient derives from them. Both are written in the same style, employ the same vocabulary, and are in fact developments of ideas expressed in Eps. II and XXII.[3] While the general picture of monasticism presented in the two Rules is identical, the set of longer regulations was quite certainly composed some years before the other. Morison points to the quotation of I Cor. 9:16b in the Preface to the Longer Rules (4/331D) as suggesting that it was as a bishop or at least a priest that Basil revised them after having originally written them during the Pontic retreat.[4] Clarke feels that there is nothing to suggest that Basil was a bishop or even a priest at the time of their delivery, and sets

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[1] Puech, op. cit., III, 299.

[2] E.g. ibid., p. 300.

[3] "For practical purposes the two sets of Rules may be taken as one authority. Nothing is gained by giving them separate treatment. I have been unable to detect any substantial development in Basil's teaching in the later (shorter) Rules" (Clarke, St Basil ..., p. 80, n. 1).

The so-called "ascetic letters," Eps. XLII-XLVI, which were printed among the Ascetica in the editions prior to the Benedictine, are suspect, a fact which unfortunately compromises Bessières' chap. V, in which Ep. XLVI is taken as a specimen for a study in variants. (The work referred to is Marius Bessières, La tradition manuscrite de la correspondance de saint Basile [reprint from JTS, Vols. XXI-XXIII; Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1923].)

[4] E. F. Morison, St. Basil and His Rule: A Study in Early Monasticism ("The S. Deiniol's Series"; New York: Oxford University Press, 1912), p. 18.

forth considerations which lead him to posit the years 362-65 as a date.[1] Whereas the De Judicio-Moralia and the De Fide seem to have been composed in accordance with a set plan, the Longer Rules possess the appearance of having originated in circumstances which remind us of classroom practice, or more accurately of the French usage denoted by the word "conférence": the monks are invited to present their problems or questions (331D) and Basil's answers and comments are in the nature of extempore discourses which seem to have been taken down by a tachygrapher; among the rules there is scarcely a hint of orderly arrangement or thematic development. In some cases the actual words of the questioner are preserved (Clarke calls attention to R. fus. I, II, III, VII, VIII, XXIV, XXXVIII, and XLIII). The instructions which Basil delivered have come down to us in fifty-five sections, though this number hardly derives from Basil himself. Throughout the Ascetica as a whole there has probably been a certain amount of later editing, and in the case before us it may be due in the main to none other than Gregory of Nazianzus, who is said to have served as Basil's literary executor for the Hexaemeron.[2] The headings are generally later additions, but the questions which they contain are presumed to be original inasmuch as they are found in Rufinus: thus e.g. R. fus. XV, while R. fus. VIII has the original question following the added title. Basil's technique in dealing with his subjects is reminiscent of that employed in the Morals. Scripture is practically all-pervasive and is the final arbiter. Only nine

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[1] Clarke, St Basil ..., pp. 70f.

[2] Socrates, H.E. IV,26. On the question of the authenticity of the two Rules vide F. Laun, "Die beiden Regeln des Basilius, ihre Echtheit und Entstehung," Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte, XLIV (1925), 1-61.

of the fifty-five rules are not supported by proof-texts (XIII, XXVI, XXVII, XXXVIII, XXXIX, XLIX, LI, LIII, and LIV); these are nonetheless pervaded by a marked biblical spirit. In 328D of the Preface Basil repeats the radical principle enunciated in the De Judicio that "the commandments are joined one to another according to the sound meaning of Scripture so that if one be broken, the others are of necessity also broken."

Whereas the Longer Rules move more in the realm of broad principle, the Shorter Rules breath a relatively spontaneous spirit which is a consequence of the more detailed and fragmentary nature of the concerns dealt with. As in the case of the longer regulations, Morison believes that the shorter were drawn up during the period of retirement "but revised and published in their present form after Basil's ordination." On the basis of the opening remarks of the Preface (413A), Clarke's judgment is that they probably date from Basil's episcopate;[1] the occasion was possibly an all-night congress of monks, or more likely superiors, held by Basil perhaps in the cenobium at Caesarea. The rules are 313 in number. Their arrangement, or rather lack of it, is one of unrelieved confusion: according to Clarke we seem to have before us the unadorned transcript of questions and answers

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[1] --So also Allard, Dict. Th. Cath., II[1], 442. Morison's idea of a revision may have been suggested by Garnier's note (II, 412) that "the copy brought from Pontus went as far as this [through R. CCLXXXVI]: the remaining twenty-seven chapters and the Penalties were added from the Caesarean codex." This raises the possibility that at Caesarea Basil completed a rule which he had previously given his monks on the banks of the Iris and which the Pontic MS represented. Or "would the difference between the Pontic and the Caesarean copies stem from the consideration that Basil had borrowed from Eustathius the first 286 prescriptions? ... However this may be, the spirit of the Shorter Rules is analogous to that of the Longer" (Puech, op. cit., III, 302). The MS situation promises to be thoroughly elucidated by Dom Gribomont in his forthcoming critical edition of the Ascetica.

stenographically recorded and untouched by any subsequent editing. The headings are all original, being the actual questions asked. Though not based on Scripture to the same extent as the longer rules, the shorter include a large number of questions which have nothing to do with the ascetic life but are concerned with scriptural difficulties, as for instance, What is "raca"? (LI), Who is "the meek"? (CXCI), and, What is, "charity doth not behave itself unseemly"? (CCXLVI).

ADDENDUM A
Basil's Monasticism

This is not the place for an examination of Basil's monastic system, our concern being with its details only as they relate to the Bible. However, an important general consideration is raised by J. W. Proudfit in an article written almost a century ago ("The Letters and Times of Basil of Caesarea," North American Review, XC [1860], 356-95). The Englishman inquires into the nature of Basil's "secessus" as revealed in his letters and comes up with an emphasis notably different from that which is customarily associated with the ascetic phase of his life. He rejects the representation of Basil as the organizer of monastic institutions in that highly developed form and rigidly severe spirit which made them so questionable an influence upon the later life of the church. Although the Benedictine editors have understandably done their best to give matters a strong monastic coloring, the letters of Basil convey a quite different conception. Basil's exulting description of his retreat in Ep. XIV does not conjure up the picture of a dour or wizened or regimented recluse, especially when we recall that while renouncing his property he had not actually parted with all of it. The force of these considerations is pointed up by a brisk letter (Ep. III) in which Basil writes an official and friend, Candidianus, to register protest over an outrage against his property. After mentioning how he "could not help laughing" with satisfaction upon reading a missive from Candidianus and after applauding his correspondent because "you do not give up the study of literature," Basil goes on to recount how "a boorish fellow living with us here at Annesi, on the death of my servant, ... at-

tacked my house with certain mad fellows like himself, brutally assaulted the women who were in charge of it, broke in the doors, and ... carried off everything." Basil urges that an example be made of the scoundrel by jailing him for a short period. "It is not only that I am indignant at the treatment I have suffered," he adds, "but I need security for the future." Evidently Basil still had considerable treasure "where thieves break through and steal," as well as no small retinue of attendants. Besides, we know that his mother ministered to his needs from the other side of the Iris (cf. Greg. Naz., Ep. V), and he speaks of spending many days "in the village opposite at my mother's" in company with Eustathius of Sebaste (Ep. CCXXIII:5). All this, Proudfit points out, "is quite another thing from the 'hairy gown and mossy cell,' and studied self-privations and self-tortures, which were essential to the later monachism" (op. cit., p. 373). Proudfit quotes Ep. II:1, in which Basil admits that he has not gotten much good out of his solitude, but this is perhaps to be taken more as an indication of natural difficulty in adjusting to the new regimen than as an expression of the mood that prevailed once this was accomplished. Yet many years later Basil was ready to grant "that even in a military life it is possible to maintain, in its utmost fervor and constancy, the love of God, and that a Christian should be distinguished not by the peculiarity of his dress but by the disposition of his soul" (Ep. CVI). Although Proudfit may now and then overstate his case in the light of the evidence which the Ascetica provides, he calls us to observe an important distinction between Basil's eschatia and medieval monasticism:

> ... Without attempting nicely to estimate his historical relations to the monachism of the Middle Age, we only affirm that what he taught and practised was a totally different thing. He assumed no religious vows, and we

may naturally conclude that he imposed none upon others; his system did not include community of goods; he says nothing in disparagement of marriage, or of domestic and social affections and duties, and his societies (if he really formed any besides that which he mentions at Caesarea) appear to have been associations more or less isolated from the world, and passing their time in prayer, praise, and the study of the Scriptures, laboring with their own hands to support themselves and to minister to the poor. We do not discern in this system the severer features of the later monachism. (Op. cit., p. 376.)

In a word, Basil's monasticism was biblical rather than medieval.

ADDENDUM B
A Conspectus of the Ascetica

On p. 53 supra the Peri krimatos Theou and the Peri pisteōs are referred to as prefacing the Ēthika. Actually the latter is preceded by five treatises in the Benedictine edition, the first three being suspect. A proper understanding at this point calls for the complete picture. As early as 392 Jerome (De vir. illus. 116) refers to to Askētikon of Basil, and the term has come to describe the whole of the broadly monastic writings attributed to the great Cappadocian. The collection as published by Garnier includes a dozen works gradually built up as spurious writings were drawn into the orbit of the genuine by the attraction of a great name. This is not to mention a large number of additional works not included by the Benedictine editor which are suppositiously attributed to Basil in a multitude of usually late MSS. In 397 Jerome's friend Rufinus in his Latin translation condensed and adapted the two Regulae so as to form a composite work of 203 rules (P.L. XXI, 483-554). Cassian (Inst. Praef.), Sozomen (H.E. III,14), Justinian (P.G. LXXXVI, 977), and Benedict (Reg. Ben. 73) are also important links in the chain of external evidence bearing on the Ascetica. But the hard core of authenticity in this ascetic congeries is

generally determined with reference to Photius, scholarly patriarch of Constantinople in the latter half of the ninth century. He speaks of reading to Askētikon in two unequal volumes, one a slender book which contained the double preface to the Morals, i.e. the Peri krimatos Theou and the Peri pisteōs, the other a correspondingly bulky volume which included the Morals, the fifty-five Longer Rules, and the 313 Shorter Rules. Inasmuch as they were added only after the time of Photius, all except these five works are more or less suspect today, namely:

--the three treatises with which the Benedictine Ascetica opens

(1) Askētikē Prodiatupōsis / Praevia Institutio Ascetica / An Introduction to the Ascetic Life

(2) Tou Autou Logos Askētikos, kai parainesis peri apotagēs biou, kai teleiōseōs pneumatikēs / Ejusdem Sermo Asceticus, et exhortatio de renuntiatione saeculi, et de perfectione spirituali / Basil's Ascetic Discourse, and exhortation on the renunciation of the world and on spiritual perfection

(3) Tou Autou Logos Peri Askēseōs, pōs dei komeisthai ton monachon / Sermo Ejusdem de Ascetica Disciplina, quomodo monachum ornari oporteat / Basil's Discourse on Ascetic Discipline: how a monk should order his life

--the two Logoi Askētikoi / Sermones Ascetici / Ascetic Discourses which are inserted between the Moral and the Longer Rules

--the two concluding works

(1) Epitimia / Poenae-Epitimia / Penalties, a two-fold penitential code of sixty and nineteen parts respectively

(2) Askētikai Diataxeis pros tous en koinobiō kai katamonas askountas /

Constitutiones Asceticae, ad eos qui simul aut solitarie vivunt / The Monastic Constitutions for those who live in a cenobium, and as solitaries.

To sum up, then: leaving out such extremes as Combefis, who in the seventeenth century apparently attributed only the Monastic Constitutions to Basil, and Petrakakos, who in our own day would seemingly withhold only the Epitimia from him, the consensus of authority is for the genuineness of at least the five works mentioned by Photius essentially as we have them, while certain scholars such as Amand (L'ascèse monastique ..., p. xxvi), Clarke (St Basil ..., pp. 74-77), de Ghellinck (Patristique ..., III, 213), Morison (St. Basil ..., pp. 15f.), Rivière (Saint Basile ..., p. 12), and Wilmart ("Le discours ... sur l'ascèse en latin," Rev. Bén., XXVII [1910], pp. 226, 232) are disposed to admit the probable authenticity of one, two, or all of the group of three discourses with which the Benedictine Ascetica opens.

The Ascetica may further be taken as a fair example of the formation of the printed tradition of Basil's works as a corpus (this has been fully traced by Amand in the Revue Bénédictine, LII-LVI [1940-46]). The first printed general or inclusive edition of Basil is considered to be the one which came from the press of Jerome Froben in 1532 through the initiative and collaboration of Erasmus. However, it was far from complete and contained none of the ascetic works. Three years later there appeared a complementary edition in Venice which is the editio princeps of much material, including the Ascetica. Of this latter category only the Poenae XII-LX of the Benedictine edition was lacking. In a lengthy and eulogistic preface addressed to Cardinal Contareno (reprinted by Garnier, I, 739-42) the

editors of 1535 furnish fair hint of the MSS used and of their technique in employing them. They declare that it is due to the tutelage and good offices of the cardinal that "three ancient manuscripts" of the Ascetica preserved in the library of the city of Venice were lent to them. By a careful examination of the variants recorded in the margin of the edition Amand identifies this trio as belonging to a group of four eleventh- and twelfth-century MSS (Marciani graeci 62, 63, 64, and 65) in the Venetian library of St. Mark; specifically which three codices they were he has not been able to determine. To these the editors added a MS from the monastery of St. Justin of Padua on Mount Cassino which they obtained through the mediation of Reginald Pole. The latter, after diligently comparing all four, chose the one which he thought offered the best text and had it very carefully transcribed by an unidentified friend, this copy constituting for the editors a fifth MS. It next seems that "sexto loco" the editors transcribed Pole's copy to utilize it as the basis of a text. They then "emended" this new copy, annotating the variants of the other MSS in the margin. It is this copy of a copy which was probably delivered to the printer, Stephen de Sabio. Such is Amand's interpretation of the obscurities in the preface to the 1535 edition. In discussing the method they followed to complete, correct, or alter their readings, the editors yet aver to have established their text with the least possible arbitrariness. It will nevertheless be seen that the Venetian edition rests upon a very precarious MS foundation. Garnier however held it in high esteem and states that he availed himself of it like a MS.

Chapter III

SCRIPTURE AND PHILOSOPHY

Basil's General Attitude toward Scripture: Its Sufficiency and Charm. Basil of Caesarea affords us an outstanding example of an unusually gifted and saintly life supremely centered in the Bible. Here was a man whose estimation of the Word was unbounded, whose deference to its authority was unlimited, whose sense of its sufficiency was unreserved. For Basil the Scriptures, if not the summum bonum of the gifts of Providence, enjoy a divine inspiration and sanction which set them utterly apart. Composed by the greatest minds of ancient times, they possess a unique superiority as to content and form. Consciously or unconsciously for Basil, the Bible had been decisive in the shaping of his early life. Upon his "conversion" he had turned to it with an all-consuming zeal and, considering the range and depth of his secular education, an amazing singlemindedness. He proceeded to make of it the sole regula of his personal life as well as of the monastic asceticism which he propagated. In his Pontic retreat it was the central if not the only object of study for him. It remained throughout his life the supreme object of devotional-literary regard. "The study of inspired Scripture is the chief way of finding our duty," he wrote about 358 on first retiring to his retreat,[1] while in a later letter to Libanius he tells the noted sophist that he is now spending his time with "Moses and

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[1] Ep. II:3/72D.

Elias and saints like them."[1] Similarly near the end of his life he complains that far from being able to read generally he finds that the state of his health "does not even allow of my reading the God-inspired Scriptures painstakingly as one should."[2] Everywhere he displays an encyclopedic knowledge of the Scriptures, and his skill in marshalling this knowledge is no less remarkable. It is the more astonishing for a day in which concordances and mechanical aids must have been few and limited. But it is in the practical application of Scripture to everyday needs that he best exhibits his attitude towards Holy Writ. Here his profound mastery and love of it is revealed, and here he has probably been rarely excelled.

His skill in the handling and application of the Scriptures was immeasurably sharpened by his intense conviction of their sufficiency. As Smith points out, "no writer has ever made a more unreserved assertion of the sufficiency of Scripture than this, 'If everything which is not of faith is sin, as the Apostle says, while faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God, then everything which is outside inspired Scripture, not being of faith, is sin.'"[3] The thought that Scripture must be meticulously observed in every particular and without subtracting from or adding to it in the slightest is an insistent theme in his writings.[4] "For

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[1] Ep. CCCXXXIX/455D.

[2] Ep. CCXLIV:3/378C. K. Weiss' statement (Die Erziehungslehre der drei Kappadozier ["Strassburger Theologische Studien"; Freiburg i.B.: Herder, 1903], p. 161) that "in their later life [the three Cappadocians] busied themselves with pagan authors" is much too broad a generalization as far as Basil is concerned. Rufinus (II,9) says that Basil read Scripture to the exclusion of everything else.

[3] R. T. Smith, St. Basil the Great ("The Fathers for English Readers;" New York: Pott, Young, & Co., 1879), pp. 201f., quoting Morals LXXX:22.

[4] Cf. infra, p. 93, n. 4.

Holy Scripture announces the will of God everywhere to all men."[1] The superiors of the cenobia are to have such a command of the Scriptures "that they may teach all men what God wishes, showing each one his duty," while in the case of those whose part it is to obey, each should "learn his own duty diligently and practice it, not being curious about anything else."[2] Moreover, "in whatever respect each one finds himself to be deficient, by devoting himself to the imitation of such men [as Joseph, Job, David, and Moses], he finds, as from some dispensary, the due medicine for his ailment."[3] In another characteristic figure Basil likens Scripture to trophē, food.[4] Concerning the daughter of a widow he writes her mother, "I urge her to pass her time in meditation upon the words of the Lord, so that her soul may be nourished by good doctrine, and that her mind may increase in growth and in stature more than does her body through the action of nature."[5] To a general's wife who has been widowed he says, "The teaching of Scripture is always useful, especially at times like this."[6] To a widow who inquires about a dream he answers: "Enjoying as you do the consolation of the Holy Scriptures, you stand in need neither of my assistance nor of that of anybody else to help you comprehend your duty."[7] As already noted, the reading of Scripture is not only a most exalted exercise in itself, but contributes to the efficacy of other forms of devotion such as prayer.

Basil practiced what he preached. He both loses himself and finds himself in Scripture. His study of it was intelligent as well as inten-

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1 R. brev. XLV/429D.
2 Ibid., CCXXXV/494E.
3 Ep. II:3/73A.
4 Hom. in Ps. XLIV:3.
5 Ep. CCXCVI/434B.
6 Ep. CCLXIX:1/415D.
7 Ep. CCLXXXIII/424DE.

sive, and his recourse to it constant. In the final analysis he drew from it his basic resources of thought and expression and action. In large measure Holy Writ provides his vocabulary and moulds his phraseology. It strongly colors his mental processes. It inspires his highest longings, motivates his deepest drives, and furnishes the materials out of which his whole spiritual habitation is built. Even when they display the strongest marks of sophistic and secular influence, his thought, his style,[1] his motives and his methods all remain primarily bibliocentric. In a very real sense the sufficiency of the Scriptures is such that they are something of a be-all and end-all for him. His works testify eloquently to his continuous preoccupation with them as the element in which he lived and moved and had his being. So true is this that Clarke uses the proportion of words per Basilian page not found in the NT as one of the three criteria of authenticity which he applies to the Ascetica.[2] Bessières, who makes an intensive textual study of Ep. XLVI (a letter unfortunately suspect), is struck by its strong biblical coloring, and by that of Ep. XLV as well.[3] And Amand points out that although the important Ep. II contains only four

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[1] As for style, his writing is on the whole pure and vigorous, even elegant. Puech (op. cit., III, 315) holds his expression and his syntax to be of a remarkably high standard for the epoch. Photius thought that one who wished to become a panegyrist need take neither Demosthenes nor Cicero but only Basil for his pattern. A modern judgment is that Gregory of Nazianzus and John Chrysostom alone can be compared with Basil as a writer and orator (Puech, ibid.). A dominant feature of his style is of course its atticism, although the strength of this factor varies with his works. The literary mood and mode of the day was that of the Second Sophistic, according to which the imitation of the ancient classicism was the highest desideratum, and Basil could not escape this influence.

[2] Clarke, The Ascetic Works ..., pp. 9ff.

[3] Bessières, La tradition manuscrite ..., p. 163; cf. chap. V (= JTS XXIII).

explicit citations from the NT, "by way of compensation it is entirely fabricated of implicit quotations and biblical reminiscences or allusions."[1] Throughout his writings generally, whether dogmatic, moral, exegetical, or polemical, Basil characteristically expresses himself in long periods of markedly biblical content. Often he busies himself in marshalling a great number of proof-texts or in piling parallel upon parallel. His use of Scripture for illustration and example is all-pervasive, and outside of the Address to Young Men and some instances in his letters, he employs it--especially the Pauline material--almost to the exclusion of other sources. Clarke aptly calls attention to R. brev. I as "a typical example of Basil's attitude toward Scripture."[2] The rule asks: "Is it lawful or expedient for a man to allow himself to do or say what he thinks right without the testimony of the inspired Scriptures?" The heart of Basil's reply merits quotation in extenso:

> Who ... would be so mad as to dare of himself to conceive anything even in thought--he who needs the holy and good Spirit for a guide, that he may be directed into the way of truth, both in thought and word and deed, and who is living blind and in darkness without the sun of righteousness, our Lord Jesus Christ himself, who illumines us with his commandments as with rays? For "the commandment of the Lord," it says, "is clear, enlightening the eyes." But since of the things or words common among us some are ordered by the commandment of God in Holy Scripture and others are passed over in silence, as for those that are written no man whatever has any authority to do anything that is prohibited or to leave undone anything that is prescribed, since the Lord once for all proclaimed: "Thou shalt keep the word which I command thee this day; thou shalt not add to it nor take away from it." For there remains a fearful expectation of judgment and a fierceness of fire about to devour those who dare such a thing. And as for those things passed over in silence the apostle Paul gave us a rule when he said: "All things are lawful to me but all things are not expedient; all things are lawful to me but all things edify not. Let no man seek his own, but

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[1] Amand, L'ascèse monastique ..., p. 95.

[2] Clarke, The Ascetic Works ..., p. 230, n. 1, which goes on to cite Adv. Eun. II:27, De Fide 1/224C, and Mor. XXVI:1 and LXXX:22.

each his neighbor's good." So that it is absolutely necessary either to be subject to God according to his commandment or to others because of his commandment.

Answering to this intrinsic sufficiency of the Scriptures is their formal charm. Basil never tires in his appreciation of the beauty and the aesthetic delights of Scripture. A prime example of this is found in the opening paragraph of the third homily on the Hexaemeron. "Here I do not wish to speak of the narrator's talent," he announces, "but of the grace of Scripture, for the narrative is so naturally told that it pleases and delights all the friends of truth. It is this charm of truth which the Psalmist expresses so emphatically when he says, 'How sweet are thy words unto my taste, yea, sweeter than honey to my mouth.'" H. Weiss points out how even single words and terms of Holy Writ seem to Basil to have been chosen with admirable skill, the apt embodiment of the basic thought, as when for instance Psalm 61:11 (LXX) says concerning wealth that it "flows" or "streams" toward us (ploutos ean hreē), since as a matter of fact wealth rushes past its possessor like an unsteadily gushing brook.[1]

The firmness of Basil's belief in the sufficiency and finality of Scripture is indicated by the preparation he counsels in approaching the narrative of the cosmogony. The soul should ready itself to receive such exalted lessons with the utmost earnestness. "How pure it should be from carnal affections, how unclouded by worldly disquietudes, how active and ardent in its researches, how eager to find in its surroundings an idea of God which may be worthy of him!"[2] It should be like a perfectly tuned in-

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[1] H. Weiss, Die grossen Kappadocier ..., pp. 12f., citing Hom in Ps. LXI:5/198A.

[2] Hom. in Hex. I:1/2A.

strument in the hands of its player.[1] The unique adequacy and charm of Scripture is also underscored by the emphasis placed upon its memorization.[2] Basil declares it as "fitting and necessary that each man should learn by heart from the inspired Scripture according to his need, for the fulfilling of godliness and that he may not grow accustomed to the traditions of men."[3] This is in answer to a question about those who have just entered the ascetic life, but in the Morals he has already laid it down as a general principle "that the Christian on each occasion when temptations assail him should recall the words spoken in the inspired Scripture with regard to the particular temptation and so both keep himself uninjured and bring to nought his adversaries."[4] As already noted, it is especially important that those "entrusted with leadership and the care of the larger body ought to know and learn by heart everything [in the Scriptures] that they may teach all men;" the latter for their part should just as diligently carry out this instruction, "not being curious about anything else."[5] Here Basil plainly distinguishes "two classes of persons" and entrusts to the one the stewardship of the Word. Generally, on the other hand, he is convinced that everybody should avail himself of the Scriptures.[6] The explanation

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[1] Hom. in Ps. XLV:1/170CD.

[2] It is true that memoriter command of subject matter was almost a necessity instead of a choice in Basil's day; codices were too big or too costly to carry around, and the educational process itself was largely one of memorization. Palladius tells us in his Lausiac History (XXXII,12) that at the Egyptian monastery of Tabennisi, which Basil probably visited, everyone learned the Scriptures by heart.

[3] R. brev. XCV/449A.

[4] Mor. LXII:4/283C.

[5] R. brev. CCXXXV/494E. Cf. CCXXXVI.

[6] Cf. supra, p. 70.

seems to be that in R. brev. CCXXXV he is thinking of the regulative and disciplinary use of the Scriptures in relation to the monastic establishment and not that he is trying to restrict them in any esoteric fashion. At any rate the alternative as expressed in the flat assertion that "Basil does not think it possible that Scripture should be profitably studied as a whole by everybody"[1] needs qualification, for it is to fly in the face of his continual advocacy of the freest and fullest resort to the Bible--unless by "study" technical investigation is meant. Thus in the case of Ep. CCIV:5/305D it is not general usage that Basil condemns; his point is that "the investigation of terms" is not to be attempted by everybody.[2] Otherwise, as when Basil says in Hom. in Ps. XLIV:2/159D that "it is not for all that the words of God are written but for those who have ears according to the inner man," his intent is not to restrict those words but to ensure that all who approach them do so in a sympathetic and spiritual manner. The emphasis is similar in Hom. in Ps. XLV:1/170C: "... it is not for every chance person to look into the divine mysteries but only for him who can become a well-tuned instrument of the promise...."[3] Basil's all-consuming conviction of the sufficiency of the Scriptures is further illustrated by his extreme respect for their terminology and his corresponding contempt for "innovation." He uses the "controversial language" of his adversaries only when driven to it by the necessity of fighting fire with fire. Even then his apologetic for so doing (De Fide 1/224BC) points out that the terms used are "not alien to the godly sense of Scripture," while

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[1] Smith, op. cit., pp. 231f.

[2] Cf. infra, pp. 101f.

[3] Cf. infra, pp. 128ff.

a little later (228DE) he beseeches and implores his monastic charges "to cease from curious investigation and unbecoming strife about words and to be content with what has been said by the saints and the Lord himself."[1]

Basil's Biblical Interest Practical, His Writings Purposive. As one so zealously devoted to the Scriptures it is not surprising to find Basil emulating their conciseness and sobriety. For him they are polla en oligois.[2] He is not often prolix; usually every word counts. Above all, Basil's interest in Scripture is moral, practical, purposive, edificatory. "But if someone say that mere instruction in the Holy Scriptures is sufficient for right conduct, he is like one who learns how to build but never builds anything, or is taught the smith's art but never deigns to put into practice what he has learned. To such a man the Apostle would say, 'Not the hearers of the law are just beforé God, but the doers of the law shall be justified.'"[3] Basil's writing is of the same order. He has no patience with literary niceties and rhetorical display for their own sakes. His use of such techniques is always subservient to the needs of the situation in hand. He rightly classifies himself as one who writes "not from any vain ambition, but from the design of bequeathing counsels of sound doctrine to the brethren."[4] He does not treat his biblical or other material as a rhetorician,[5] but is preoccupied first and foremost with giving it practical relevance and utility. As Amand remarks, "Basil never wrote to say noth-

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[1] Cf. infra, pp. 148ff.

[2] Hom. III:1/16E.

[3] R. fus. VII:4/347CD; cf. Pref. to R. fus., 3/329CD.

[4] Ep. CXXXV:2/226E.

[5] Viz. his scornful reference to "the lying art of the orators" in the Address to Young Men 3/176B.

ing, and the gravity of his spirit would not tolerate the frivolity of the sophistic."[1] Gregory of Nazianzus was impressed with the same characteristic. "Rhetoric was for him [Basil] only an accessory: he retained of it only that which could serve our philosophy."[2] In his concern for the meaning of Scripture as it issues in application, Basil was thinking one of the thoughts of his teacher, Gregory Thaumaturgus, after him. Speaking of the "admirable men who have embraced the true philosophy," the Wonder-worker says: "These are little concerned with fine diction and the seemliness of words. They put the sound in the second place, and choose to concern themselves with the facts and their particular and accurate investigation and exposition."[3] "Our writers," says Basil, "do not amuse themselves by polishing their periods, and to the sonorous expression we always prefer clarity of terms."[4] In similar vein Swete points out that "neither in Basil's letters nor in his formal treatises do we encounter anywhere the polemical theologian who finds pleasure in mere logomachy."[5] This is not to say that his letters, for example, lack the good grace which is so important an epistolary feature of the period. "But most often it serves only to introduce a request or advices of various kinds, and it is rare that he wastes his time on letters of pure friendship or of simple distraction."[6] The "literary coquetry" which he exhibits in such letters as IV and CXLVII is

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1 Amand, L'ascèse monastique ..., p. 153. Cf. Ep. CXXXV.

2 Greg. Naz., Orat. XLIII:13/P.G.XXXVI:512C.

3 Greg. Thaum., Address to Origen, par. I.

4 Hom. in Hex. VI:2/51C.

5 H. B. Swete, The Holy Spirit in the Ancient Church (London: Macmillan & Co., 1912), p. 240.

6 Puech, op. cit., III, 307.

not so much an unconscious reversion to his worldly training as it is a case of his consciously striking a pose to measure up to the expectations of his cultured correspondents.

Reason and Revelation: "Foolish Wisdom" vs. "the Oracles of the Spirit." Basil's disdain for the world and its wisdom as compared with the Word of truth is expressed in far more positive terms. On the surface at least there is the strongest tension between the two. Again and again he sets secular learning off against Scripture to the disparagement of the former. The issue as it presents itself to him is clear-cut, and his choice is no less unequivocal. "Shall I then prefer foolish wisdom to the oracles of the Spirit? Shall I not rather exalt Him who has not occupied our minds with vain things but has provided that all Scripture should be written for the edification and upbuilding of our souls?"[1] "Reject then the foolish wisdom of this world, and receive with me the more simple but infallible doctrine of truth."[2] Basil is deeply impressed with the simplicity of the scriptural faith,[3] and on no few occasions makes this quality the subject of laudatory comment. His quarrel is not only with the vanity of worldly wisdom as such, but with this wisdom in its desolating effects upon the fellowship and their faith. The tradition of those outside[4] is the root of endless evils. One form of its deceitfulness is the "technical terminology" which Basil controverts in the De Spiritu Sancto and which his adversaries use to "pervert the simplicity and artlessness of

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[1] Hex. IX:1/80E.

[2] Hex. III:6/28C.

[3] Cf. Adv. Eun. I:1/207A,B.

[4] Cf. infra, p. 79, n. 4.

the faith."[1] "It is these careful distinctions, derived from unpractical philosophy and vain delusion, which our opponents have first studied and admired and then transferred to the simple and unsophisticated doctrine of the Spirit, to the belittling of God the Word and the setting at nought of the Divine Spirit."[2] In the Hexaemeron Basil similarly pleads that no one be allowed to compare "the simple and inartificial nature of the utterances of the Spirit with the inquisitive discussions of philosophers upon the heavens." He epitomizes his plea in a vigorous characterization. "As the beauty of chaste women surpasses that of a harlot, so our arguments are superior to those of our opponents. They only seek to persuade by forced reasoning. With us truth presents itself naked and without artifice."[3]

But Basil's dichotomy between what he calls the true philosophy and the false[4] may be said to be more apparent than real. The cleavage is not

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[1] De Sp. S. VI:13/10D. Ep. VIII:2/81C is apropos except for R. Melcher (Der 8. Brief des hl. Basilius, ein Werk des Evagrius Pontikus ["Münsterische Beiträge zur Theologie"; Münster i.W.: Aschendorff, 1923]): "This is ever their object, not to teach simple souls lessons drawn from Holy Scripture, but to mar the harmony of the truth by heathen philosophy."

[2] De Sp. S. III:5/5D.

[3] Hex. III:8/30DE.

[4] "In the usage of the Cappadocians and St. John Chrysostom the expression hoi exōthen [cf. Mk. 4:11, I Cor. 5:12, and Col. 4:5 (=) I Thes. 4:12] and that which is found later, mataian philosophian [cf. Col. 2:8], habitually designate profane wisdom, the Greek philosophers, in opposition to the divine wisdom, that of the Christians, to which is reserved the name of 'true philosophy' or simply 'philosophy'" (B. Pruche, Basile de Césarée, Traité du Saint-Esprit [Gr. text and Fr. trans.: "Sources chrétiennes"; Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1946], p. 113a, n. 2; cf. F. Boulenger, Grég. de Naz., discours funèbres, pp. lvi f., and Aux jeunes gens, p. 43). Clarke (St Basil, p. 23, n. 6) suggests that the use of philosophia to designate Christianity may be traced back to Origen's synthesis of the Gospel and philosophy. In this new usage the word is employed primarily in a twofold sense, signifying either the Christian religion and doctrine in general or the Christian ascetic life in particular. Basil's prejudice against worldly philosophy appears to make him a bit chary about using the term in spite

absolute. It is true that in terms of his conscious purpose worldly wisdom and culture are set at nought in comparison with the scriptural revelation. Practically however his attitude toward "vain philosophy" is characterized by an ambivalence which is the logical consequence of his twofold education. His respect for reason is indeed profound. According to his anthropology man is "formed of earth, but the work of God's hands; much weaker than the brute, but ordained to command beings without reason and soul; inferior as regards natural advantages, but, thanks to the privilege of reason, capable of raising [himself] to heaven."[1] Seeing is by no means the only believing. "Reason, for the discovery of truth, is much surer than the eye."[2] In denying the contention of Eunomius that the Spirit occupies a place subordinate to the Father and to the Son, Basil argues that "neither by the Holy Scriptures have we been taught any such thing nor from what we have said before is it possible to reason toward any such conclusion."[3] In contending that our knowledge does not extend to the essence of things, he asks: "If neither by the witness of the senses nor by the teaching of the Word the knowledge [of the earth's essence] is confirmed, whence will anyone declare that he understands it?"[4] While Basil does not hesitate to employ the fruits of observation and reason, these are always sub-

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of its "christianization": thus Morison in denying the authenticity of the two short Ascetic Discourses which follow the Morals states that in them "the ascetic life, for example, is described as 'the life of philosophy', an expression nowhere to be found in [Basil's] authentic works" (St. Basil ..., p. 17).

1 Hex. VI:1/50CD.

2 Hex. VI:11/61D.

3 Adv. Eun. III:1/272B.

4 Adv. Eun. I:13/225C.

servient to the divine revelation as contained in the written and the Living Word. Everything is brought to the bar of Scripture. Thus when his opponents claim to have comprehended the earth's essence through reason, he retorts, "What reason? Where in Scripture is it found? By which of the saints has it been handed down?"[1] Letter CCXXXV comprises a brief epistemological discussion introduced by the question, "Which is first [in order], knowledge or faith?" "I reply," Basil answers, "that generally, in matters of instruction, faith precedes knowledge. But in our teaching if anyone asserts knowledge to come before faith I make no objection--meaning by knowledge what is within the measure of human understanding." Basil proceeds to expand the thesis alluded to in the De Fide, where he notes that "the inspired Scripture is greatly conscious of the unlimited character of knowledge and the unattainability of the divine mysteries at the present time by human nature."[2] That is, we do not know the essence of things but know them only by their "form and other properties," as he goes on to say in Ep. CCXXXV. Thus I "confess that I know what is knowable of God, and that I know what it is which is beyond my comprehension.[3] ...

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[1] Adv. Eun. I:12/225B.

[2] De Fide 3/226C.

[3] So Jackson renders. Confining ourselves to his translation for the moment, the difficulty on this basis is in the evidently ambiguous use of the term "know," for it is hardly thinkable that Basil employs eidenai in the same sense in both parts of the statement. Rather must not the second half mean that he is aware that there are some things which are unknowable? Jackson states in a note (p. 275) that "a various reading gives the sense 'but do not know what is beyond my comprehension'" (cf. Ben. ed. note, ad loc). This certainly comports with Basil's argument in the context of the letter confronting us, in Ep. CCXXXIV, in Ep. XVI, and in Adv. Eun. I:12/224Cff.; with his statement in the De Fide 2/225C that the nature of the majesty and glory of God is "incomprehensible by mind;" and with the following sentence from Ep. CCXXXIV:2/358A: "So knowledge of the divine es-

Indeed, in this way too, I both know, and am ignorant of, myself. I know indeed who I am, but, so far as I am ignorant of my essence I do not know myself." In other words, we are ignorant of the essence of God and know him only by the way in which he reveals or manifests himself.[1] "Basically the great quarrel between Eunomius and Basil is that Eunomius, confident of the power of human reason, believes that one is able to arrive at a clear definition of the divine essence, and that Basil judges it incomprehensible."[2] While not distrusting reason, Basil is deeply conscious of its limitations and especially of its abuses as found in "unpractical philosophy": in one place he describes his purpose in attacking his opponents as "the endeavor to confute those 'oppositions' advanced against us which are derived from 'knowledge falsely so-called.'"[3] Thus when Eunomius argues that if the Son existed already there was no sense of God causing him to be born, Basil calls it the most banal sophisma--idle playing with reason, childish toying with dialectic.[4] The Birth is inscrutable. Though as a

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sence involves perception of [God's] incomprehensibility, and the object of our worship is not that of which we comprehend the essence, but of which we comprehend that the essence exists." No final judgment is possible in the absence of the full MS testimony, but meanwhile if the more difficult reading is to be accepted Jackson's primary translation would stand.

I suggest however that this is not the only choice we face. There is an emendation involving eidenai which is very plausible. It concerns the likelihood of dittography--the possibility that the second occurrence of the verb is a mistake influenced by its first appearance, and that instead of the second eidenai we should read einai. This yields excellent sense: "We confess ... that there is something which escapes our understanding." And it makes better Greek, the unaccented ti being an indefinite rather than an interrogative pronoun. As the text stands the best rendering is probably, "We confess ... that we also know that there is something which escapes our understanding."

[1] "This is what we know about God, what he has revealed to all men": Adv. Eun. I:14/226D.

[2] Puech, op. cit., III, 283.

[3] De Spir. S. IX:23/20D; cf. De Fide 2/225B.

[4] Adv. Eun. II:14/248E.

matter of principle Basil professes contempt for "the foolish wisdom of the world," he thoroughly respects sound "external" philosophy and learning and uses it in spite of himself. This double attitude[1] is strikingly displayed in the Hexaemeron. Here Basil freely avails himself of the sciences in explaining the sacred text. Though committed to the Mosaic cosmogony, he seeks to elucidate it rationally by drawing upon the theories of the philosophers. The scholarly spirit which distinguishes his effort is well expressed in the declaration that "the wonder which the greatest things evokes in us diminishes not a whit when we have discovered the manner in which they are produced."[2] But where there is a contradiction between science and Scripture, the latter always prevails, as in the conflict between philosophy and Genesis over the eternity of the world and of matter. "At all events," he affirms, "let us prefer the simplicity of faith to the demonstrations of reason."[3] Basil's position is thus quite paradoxical. Consciously he turns his back on Athens, yet like Lot's wife involuntarily he looks back. But in the end he leaves no doubt that his true home is Jerusalem.

Reason and Faith. That this is the case is seen in the related area of reason and faith. Here too Basil is found to be ultra-scriptural and to that extent quite unscientific. A series of definitions in Morals LXXX:22/317D leaves no doubt at this point. "What is the distinguishing mark of a Christian? Faith working by love. What is the mark of faith? Unhesitating conviction of the truth of the inspired words.... What is the mark of

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1 Puech, op. cit., III, 255.

2 Hex. I:10/10D.

3 Ibid.

a believer? To hold fast by such conviction in the strength of what Scripture says and to dare neither to set it at nought nor to add to it." Every word and action is to be rigidly confirmed by the testimony of inspired Scripture.[1] And all Scripture is to be implicitly and unhesitatingly accepted. With Basil he who hesitates in this regard is lost. Morals VIII:1 affirms "that a man ought not to waver and doubt with regard to the things said by the Lord, but to be persuaded that every utterance of God is true and possible, though nature suggests the opposite; for herein lies the struggle of faith." Lest there be any doubt the third part of the same rule reiterates "that a man ought not on the strength of his own arguments to set at nought the sayings of the Lord, but should realize that the words of the Lord are more worthy of credence than a man's private conviction." Scripture is to be accepted at face value, reason to the contrary notwithstanding. Thus in Hom. II:2/213B of the Hexaemeron Basil assails as "corrupters of the truth" those who, "incapable of submitting their reason to Holy Scripture," distort at will its meaning. And in Ep. CCXXXVI:1 he aligns himself with "those who love the Lord and have acquired preconception from faith stronger than proof from reason." "For if we are going to measure all things by our own understanding and if we leave out everything that cannot be circumscribed by our reasonings, then we shall lose both the reward of faith and the reward of hope. How can we be worthy of the Beatitudes, which are reserved for faith in things unseen, if we are persuaded only by things clear to our reason?"[2] Abraham's spiritual vision was unsurpassed, and he is the exemplar whom Basil holds up in the De Fide

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[1] Mor. XXVI:1/256B.

[2] Adv. Eun. II:24/260E f.

1/224CD, where another definition of faith is given: "Now faith is an unhesitating acceptance of what is heard, with full conviction of the truth of what is proclaimed by the grace of God." Basil goes on to quote Rom. 4:21, in which is expressed Abraham's assurance that "whatever [God] has promised, he is able also to perform." In this connection it is interesting to compare R. brev. CCLXI, in which the monks remind Basil that "the Lord promised that all things whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive." "How was it then," they inquire, "that even the saints themselves when they asked certain things did not receive them? For such was the Apostle's lot, who said, 'Concerning this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me'--and he received not his request." Basil answers with an explanation that is reasoned but above all scriptural. The reference to the apostle Paul calls up a related mention in Hex. IX:6/86E, where Basil exclaims, "Do you not see that the viper which attached itself to the hand of Paul, whilst he gathered sticks, did not injure him because it found the saint full of faith?" Here is faith-prevention, or faith-healing gone one better. Even for Basil this is to venture out on perilously thin ice, and in fact his footing gives way when it is recalled that his faith did not cure his liver ailment (or prevent it) any more than Paul's faith removed his thorn in the flesh. We may at least say that in the R. brev. CCLXI answer, reasonableness if not reason triumphs over this kind of irrational faith.

The Supremacy of Scripture. On the whole there can be no doubt of the ascendancy of Scripture over philosophy in Basil's mind. The precise nature of the equation is a matter of some complexity.[1] For the two

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[1] Cf. bibliographical note, p. 18, n. 2.

factors are like the warp and woof of Basil's thought. Even in his own mind the exact relationship and balance between them is not a little confused. Outwardly he disclaims and indeed disparages secular wisdom, resorting to worldly disputation and non-scriptural terminology only against his will. As far as Basil's conscious purpose is concerned, A. de Broglie expresses it well when he says:

> The weapon of philosophy is in the hands of Basil purely defensive. When the enemies of the faith attacked the dogma or vitiated it by an argument taken from a philosophic system, Basil followed them into the system which they adopted, in order to prove to them that their argument was without force and did not entail the consequence which they derived from it. Then, once the attack was repulsed, he entered into the citadel of doctrine and shut himself up in it again.[1]

It is however Basil's unwilling or unwitting use of philosophy, the unconscious place and power which it holds in his thought, that is of greater importance and difficulty. From beginning to end Basil's writings are more or less saturated with philosophic content. Amand has established this even for the Ascetica, a fact of significance because it was written early in reaction against pagan culture and is so severely scriptural, while the writing which is Basil's unique and in many ways most important contribution, the Hexaemeron, is the one which owes the most to secular wisdom from the standpoint of both ideas and form.[2] This is not to mention the Address to Young Men, where Basil well-nigh becomes the Christian classicist. These examples are enough to show that in spite of his conscious rejection of worldly wisdom, he was too deeply imbued with cultural learning to be able to cast off its influence. To do so he would have had to jump out of

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[1] A. de Broglie, quoted in P. Allard, Dict. Th. Cath, II[1], 444.

[2] Courtonne, Saint Basile et l'hellénisme, pp. xiii f.

his mental skin. His profound schooling in the poets, historians, and philosophers comes to the surface in spite of himself. The problem is indeed more psychological than logical. Repressed on a conscious level, Basil's secular culture rises to expression on a more or less unconscious one: so much a part of him is this learning and tradition that he may hardly realize that he is expressing unconsciously what he has outwardly resolved to put behind him. On this basis Basil may be said consciously to have capitulated to the best in the tradition he had rejected. But it is important to note that he did not yield himself to secular philosophy as a philosophy but as a cultural pattern. It is a well-known literary axiom that a writer can express himself only with relation to the cultural milieu of his day, and Basil was no exception. It is in these terms that a statement by Amand may be accepted as putting the whole matter in proper focus. After remarking that "in order to form an exact idea on this subject it would be necessary to consider the entire extent of the literary work of our writer," Amand continues:

> Let us say simply that the homilies, the treatises, and even certain letters of Basil would indeed be unintelligible if we were to suppose that their author had positively and consciously refused to utilize hic et nunc the resources of a rhetoric and of a philosophy to the study of which he had devoted all the years of his adolescence. A purely unconscious influence of Hellenistic thought upon the Homilies on the Hexaemeron and most of the so-called moral or miscellaneous homilies--this is an unthinkable monstrosity for anyone who has read at all closely in these works where Greek philosophical thought holds so large a place![1]

We have already noted the autobiographical reference by Basil to the early crisis which issued in his renunciation of the world.[2] Here he

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[1] Amand, L'ascèse monastique ..., p. 249, n. 274.

[2] Ep. CCXXIII:2: cf. supra, pp. 29ff.

characterizes his youthful classical learning as "a wisdom declared folly by God" and tells how he perceived its utter uselessness upon turning to the gospel. This is unmistakable, but not so another reference, according to Courtonne. The Benedictine feels that Basil's statement to Libanius in Ep. CCCXXXIX that he is now spending his time in the Bible with its barbarous idiom is not a disavowal, except of Attic elegance.[1] But when Basil goes on to explain that he has forgotten everything he ever learned from Libanius, and when the latter rather wistfully comments that nevertheless its roots are still there and always will be,[2] small comfort remains in Courtonne's position. It would seem that Attic elegance and everything associated with it is swept away, and that the Bible alone remains.[3] In any case, whatever doubt exists as to the position of Basil here, the Address to Young Men on How They Might Profit from Secular Literature is unequivocal--at least respecting Basil's opinion of the classics as an ingredient in godly education. And it is in this, one of the very writings in which Basil most clearly reveals his broad familiarity with the classical tradition, that the supremacy of the Bible is most clearly affirmed. At the same time secular literature is congenially appraised instead of being prejudicially condemned. Discrimination--a morally selective choice among the pagan writings--is the keynote of the treatise. Possibly written in later life,[4] the Address may well be taken as representative of the final

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[1] Courtonne, op. cit., p. 12.

[2] Bas. Ep. CCCXL.

[3] In Ep. CLXXXVI, "To Antipater, the Governor," Basil obviously praises philosophy as "an excellent thing" on the basis of casual expediency rather than of principle: he "economizes."

[4] The to te gar hēlikias houtōs echein at the beginning of the trea-

equilibrium attained by the struggle of the two elements, the Greek and the Christian, in Basil's mind. The remarkable little work has to do of course with an issue which was a burning one in Basil's day, the value of the classics as an aid to Christian education.[1] What should be the relation between pagan learning and Christian teaching? Basil discusses the question amiably and with a rather surprising show of liberal and humanistic spirit. His thesis is that, subject to a morally discerning choice which rigidly censors the bawdy and the reprehensible, the classics may perform great service in preparing young minds for the more difficult truths of Scripture. The poets, the orators, and the historians often concern themselves with virtue and furnish many precepts and examples which are capable of ennobling the soul of a young person. But Scripture is pre-eminent in this potentiality, and it is therefore in terms of their ability to lead to its understanding that the profane authors are to be evaluated. Perhaps at this point the paradox, the benign duplicity in Basil's position begins to resolve itself. The enigma is set forth in two statements of Courtonne: "Basil condemns to the end of his life that which had enchanted his youth,"[2] and "Basil nevertheless approves and even recommends secular studies."[3] He does condemn secular culture and worldly wisdom where they attempt to sup-

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tise does not warrant Deferrari and McGuire's assertion (Deferrari, op. cit., IV, 365) that it was written when Basil was "advanced in years;" hēlikia here does not mean "my advanced age" but refers simply to "maturity."

[1] The celebrated discourse enjoyed great vogue during the Renaissance and appears to have been the first of Basil's works to be printed, though this was probably in Latin. In the edition of Garnier it is incongruously placed among the twenty-four general homilies as the twenty-second, evidently following a few of the MSS. Salaville (Echos d'orient, XXX [1931], 37) calls the Address "a veritable manifesto of Christian humanism."

[2] Courtonne, op. cit., p. 12. [3] Ibid., p. 13.

plant or even compete with the faith as the object of man's supreme allegiance. And he does advocate secular study providing it is strictly subservient to the divine revelation and contributes to its understanding. The classics are to be studied from this standpoint, not as an end in themselves. Worldly wisdom is useful as long as it leads men to God and not away from him. It is because many gave themselves to such study "and neglected God" that they grew old in investigating vain things.[1] This is the basis on which Basil condemns secular studies. The highest wisdom is godliness. Everything which does not contribute to it is vanity. As Basil states his theory of education in R. fus. XV:3/356DE: "The study of literature should befit the end in view, so that the young may use vocabulary taken from Scripture, and instead of fables be told stories of marvelous deeds and be instructed with precepts out of the Proverbs." Basil was seemingly quite content for the youth of his monasteries to be brought up without any kind of classical education.[2] So intense was the moral-practical drive behind his pedagogy that he valued the classics solely as a propaedeutic to the Scriptures. An educational theory which considers secular learning strictly from this point of view and which seemingly has no place for speculative knowledge may leave us with serious misgivings. But though in the Address to Young Men Basil recommends the pagan writers only as moralists, Courtonne still feels that he does not condemn the education which undertook to assign them a much less restrained role.

If he had judged it evil, he would not have failed to have said so and to have put the youth on guard against it. On the contrary, in reading the

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1 Hom. XII:6/102CD.

2 Morison, St. Basil and His Rule, pp. 105f.

> discourse one gathers the very clear impression that on the whole it [this more liberal education] had its advantages. Besides, it is in this manner that tradition has always interpreted the work of Basil: his name has always been invoked in favor of the education which joined to Christian training the study of the pagan writers of antiquity.[1]

In any event, Basil was in no sense merely provincial or obscurantist. His critique of pagan wisdom in the Address is balanced and constructive. Educationally, he would assimilate the best of secular letters and culture instead of condemning it indiscriminately. In a day when the fellowship of the faith sometimes gave voice to narrow and intemperate denunciation of non-Christian culture, he stands out prominently for the sobriety and catholicity of his attitude. While none of the church Fathers was opposed in a blind and destructive way to pagan learning, not one took the extremely enlightened and advanced position that he assumed,[2] at least pedagogically. Added strength is thus given to his ultimate insistence upon the absolute superiority of the Scriptures over secular literature as the curriculum par excellence.[3] Throughout his writings Basil is motivated by a thought prominent in the last four homilies on the Hexaemeron, where the methods of Greek and Christian scholarship are contrasted: in the latter discipline the aim is not the mere perfection of theoretical knowledge but the perfection of practical conduct. If he is dominated by any other single purpose educationally it is to make the resources of antiquity available for serving the true faith--for this, the divine revelation as contained in the God-inspired oracles, is the supreme wisdom.[4]

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[1] Courtonne, op. cit., p. 14.

[2] L. V. Jacks, St. Basil and Greek Literature ("Catholic University of America Patristic Studies"; Washington: Cath. U. of Amer., 1922), p. 116.

[3] Cf. K. Weiss, Die Erziehungslehre der drei Kappadozier, on the Basilian pedagogics.

[4] In the conclusion (pp. 146-50) of his dissertation, The Influence of the Second Sophistic on the Style of the Sermons of St. Basil the Great (Cath. U. of Amer. Patr. Studies, 1922), J. M. Campbell sustains the thesis of the foregoing pages that Basil unequivocally rejected pagan culture but could not entirely free himself from it.

Chapter IV

INSPIRATION AND THE AUTHORITY OF SCRIPTURE

Inspiration and Infallibility. Basil shared with the Fathers generally an unbounded estimation of the Bible as a unique book. He approaches it with the greatest awe, he handles it with the utmost reverence, he meditates and mediates its message with a profound sense of the inscrutable mystery and unutterable wisdom contained in its pages. Here is a writing absolutely set apart from all other literature in its origin and in its contents. The Scriptures are the oracles of God, hē theopneustos graphē. With Basil the epithet "God-inspired" is the most characteristic designation of these writings and the most revealing. They are God-breathed; this divine inspiration is the source of their supremacy and authority. The superlative category which they occupy is likewise suggested by such other designations as hē hagia graphē, "the Holy Scripture;" hai theiai graphai, "the Divine Scriptures;" and hoi hieroi logioi, "the sacred utterances." The Scriptures are also ta tou pneumatos logia, "the oracles of the Spirit." They are in a peculiar sense the product of His activity; the Godhead in the office of the Third Person of the Trinity is dominant in the giving of the Word. The opening phrases of Basil's exordium on the Psalms, quoting II Tim. 3:16, constitute his watchword: "'All Scripture is God-inspired and profitable,' and was composed by the Holy Spirit...."[1]

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[1] Hom. in Ps. I:1/90A (=) De Spir. S. XXI:52/45C.

Indeed, it has been written "by the instruction [Jackson, "dictation": en didaktois] of the Spirit."[1] It follows that "in the inspired words there is not one idle syllable."[2] "Marvel at the accuracy of each word," Basil exclaims in Hom. XVI:4/137D. Not only does every word mean something: the silence of Scripture is also significant. Thus in the cosmogony Moses "passed over in silence, as useless, all that is unimportant for us."[3] Just as we lapse from faith and incur the charge of arrogance when we subtract anything from the Scriptures, so we dare not add to them; to do either is to risk hell-fire.[4] It might seem to follow that in theory at least hē theopneustos graphē is verbally inspired. "Reject then the foolish wisdom of this world," says Basil in his discussion of the cosmogony, "and receive with me the more simply expressed but infallible doctrine of truth."[5] In Mor. VIII:1 he lays it down "that a man ought ... to be per-

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[1] Hex. I:1/2D.

[2] Hex. VI:11/61C. In this attitude as well as in his deep concern with the subject of inspiration generally Basil reflects the influence of his master Origen. We have already noted (supra, pp. 40ff.) that the two Cappadocians began their compilation of the Philocalia with a treatment of the proofs of inspiration in the course of which Origen expresses the opinion that "not a single tittle of the Sacred Scriptures is without something of the wisdom of God" (I:28). Clement's position was perhaps even more positive that the inspiration of Scripture made it perfect in each single letter and syllable and everywhere in the same measure; Gregory of Nazianzus shares this conviction that the most insignificant minutiae could not have been written down and preserved without reason (Orat. II:105/P.G. XXXV:504C). Cf. Basil, De Jud. 6/219D.

[3] Hex. IX:1/80E.

[4] De Fide 1/224D; ibid. E, citing Gal. 3:15; De Jud. 4/217E; Mor. LXXX:22/317D; R. brev. I/414D, citing Deut. 4:2 loosely; Adv. Eun. II:8/243DE.

[5] Hex. III:6/28C.

suaded that every utterance of God is true and possible." Precisely what these concepts meant to Basil is not easily determined. Do they mean that he adhered to the bald literal infallibility of the Word? It is true that on the whole Basil accepted Scripture unquestioningly at face value and applied it unflinchingly in a literal sense. But for all his fervid orthodoxy he was too much a man of letters and too resourceful a thinker to be ensnared in a pedantic obscurantism. He once speaks disdainfully of those who with little or no qualification set themselves up as literary critics,[1] and on several occasions candidly refers to variants among the copies or editions of the NT.[2] Again, he expresses himself in astonishment to Amphilochius that the latter should demand "verbal precision" in the Scripture.[3] Thus his "instruction" or "dictation" theory could hardly include a

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[1] Cf. infra, pp. 101f.

[2] Cf. infra, pp. 212f.

[3] Ep. CLXXXVIII, Canon 15/275D. Three of Basil's letters are made up of replies to queries by Amphilochius (the same to whom the De Spir. S. was written) on matters of church discipline, although Basil was not the author of the present arrangement of the answers or canons, as they are called. However, the last two headings, XV and XVI, in the Canonical Ep. CLXXXVIII are not disciplinary decrees but have to do with difficulties of scriptural interpretation. In the case of Canon XV Amphilochius has made inquiry about Ps. 8:8, the LXX of which (vs. 9) reads: "the birds of the heaven and the fishes of the sea that pass through the paths of the seas." He is evidently puzzled by the mention of birds and fishes under the same category as diaporeuomena tribous thalassōn, and demurs that "there is something forced in the interpretation which conveys the meaning of the original but does not exactly render what is denoted by the Hebrew text," as Basil phrases it. Such is the background for the astonishment expressed by Basil at this demand for literal precision. With Gen. 1:20-22 in mind he points out that at the creation birds and fishes had the same origin, both genera having been brought forth "from the waters." This is indeed not unnatural in that both "swim"--the one through the water, the other in the air: cf. Hex. VIII:2/72B.

rigid doctrine of so-called plenary literal inspiration. His emphasis was on the spiritual rather than the verbal infallibility of the Scriptures--the inerrancy of the message in the soul of the believer when the Word is mediated by the Spirit. Thus he could recognize that the Scriptures were verbally inspired in the teaching they convey without being committed to a theory of verbal infallibility in the letter itself. "The letter killeth," he would have said, "but the Spirit giveth life." The tension here is in the nature of paradox rather than of contradiction. It is to be resolved by the frank recognition that Basil does not have a logically consistent, fully developed "philosophy of inspiration;" let us not make the mistake of trying to extract one where none exists.[1]

That Basil's concept of inspiration, profound as it was, did not embrace the extreme doctrine of literal infallibility is evident from his relation to the OT. In common with the Eastern Fathers generally he employed one of the Greek versions. The Hexaplarian text of Origen was adopted all over Pontus and Cappadocia and it is a reasonable certainty that this was the form used by Basil.[2] His frequent preference for the literalistic version of Aquila, whose translation the Hexapla included, is a characteristic noted by Weiss.[3] While it is therefore an incorrect generalization to say that Basil always quotes Scripture in the Greek of the LXX,[4] it is true

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[1] Creation ex nihilo--the prerogative of the Almighty, not of the investigator!

[2] H. Weiss, Die grossen Kappadocier ... als Exegeten, p. 38; Johannes Quasten, private interview.

[3] H. Weiss, op. cit., p. 37.

[4] Jackson, NpNF, VIII, p. 322a, n. 5.

that he always quotes the Greek in some form and never the Hebrew. In so doing he was following the example of the apostles, whose use of the LXX invested it almost with the character of an inspired work. This extreme attitude was in fact adopted by no few of the Fathers and was shared even by the Antiochians. Nor did the critical spirit and studies of Origen render him immune to the attractions of such a view. On the other hand it is altogether improbable that Basil shared any faith in the inspiration of the LXX. The most that he does is to commend the reverent procedure of the LXX scholars in rendering certain Hebrew terms such as Sabaoth, Adonai, and Eloi by transliteration instead of translation.[1] In his letters Basil himself follows somewhat this example in the treatment of some seven Hebrew words.[2] Otherwise, far from placing ultimate dependence on any verbally inspired Hebrew original, he does not even know the language. In the face of such a handicap he struggles in vain to vindicate his sound intuition that the original can be overlooked only with peril. Generally the most that he attempts is the etymology of Hebrew names, possibly influenced by Origen, who as an adherent of Platonic philosophy invested names with "essential" significance. On one occasion involving the interpretation of epephereto to translate the מרחפת of Gen. 1:2c Basil gives the apt explanation of a certain Syrian as being "more analogous to the Hebrew term," and does this with the admission that "a nearer approach to the scriptural sense" is thereby secured.[3] Yet in Ep. CCLX:2-4, when he essays the

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[1] Adv. Eun. II:7/243C.

[2] (Sister) A. C. Way, The Language and Style of the Letters of St. Basil (Cath. U. of Amer. Patristic Studies; Washington: Cath. U. of Amer., 1927), p. 158.

[3] Hex. II:6/18B-D.

explanation of Gen. 4:15a^{bc}, a passage which he describes as a contemporary crux interpretum, the original is ignored, and this in the face of the fact that the Hebrew gives a radically different sense from the Greek.[1] In seeking the meaning of the word Satan, he says that the devil is called by that name "for being opposed to the good, for thus the word of the Hebrews means as we have learned in the Books of the Kings," whereupon he proceeds to consider the etymology and usage of the Greek diabolos.[2] In short, Basil pursues his exegesis all but exclusively upon the basis of the Greek text. So completely does he capitulate to this version that the OT becomes for him virtually a Greek book.[3] If considerations of literal infallibility were at all paramount, he could not thus have stopped short of the original. This is not to mention the fact that even in the Greek he sometimes

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[1] Alike in Garnier-Maran and in the LXX the passage reads pas ho apokteinas Kain hepta ekdikoumena paralusei ("whosoever slays Cain will exact vengeance for seven sins"). The Hebrew לָכֵן כָּל־הֹרֵג קָיִן שִׁבְעָתָיִם יֻקָּם says nothing of the sort. Skinner in the ICC (p. 110) notes that the subject of יֻקָּם might be Cain but is more probably impersonal = AV, RSV; certainly it is not the murderer of Cain = Basil (Ben. ed.). Seemingly with no thought of investigating the Hebrew, Basil characteristically proceeds with a moral-practical interpretation. In purely contrived fashion he enumerates seven sins of Cain, and--"since the word ekdikoumenon may be understood in two senses, both the sin for which vengeance was taken and the manner of the punishment"--Cain's seven punishments as well. Indeed the seventh penalty is none other than the mark which the Lord put upon Cain to proclaim his guilt to all, which mark the Hebrew portrays as protective and not punitive.

[2] Hom. IX:9/82Af.; the Scripture referred to is I Kings 11:14a, "And the Lord stirred up against Solomon an adversary, Hadad the Edomite." Cf. Benedictine note, ad loc.; also R. brev. CCLXVIII/508B.

In the Commentary on Isaiah I-XVI attributed to Basil the author discusses the name of the prophet Amos in relation to Amoz the father of Isaiah, and H. Weiss (op. cit., pp. 32f.) feels that the writer's differentiation between the two in pronunciation and meaning testifies to a certain knowledge of Hebrew on his part. But this and Weiss' further mentions on p. 33 are clouded by the suspicion which attaches to the authenticity of the commentary. Cf. Addendum C at the end of this chapter.

[3] Cf. infra, pp. 183ff. Let us not forget that "the Greek version is quoted to a very large extent by the writers of the New Testament, even in passages where it diverges widely from the original." F. W. Farrar, whom we have quoted, notes that "out of 275 passages quoted from the O. T. in the New, there are 37 in which the LXX. differs materially from the Hebrew" (Hist. of Interp. [Bampton Lectures for 1885], p. 117).

quotes his texts in anything but a literal manner.[1]

Authorship and the Divine Afflatus. A notable sanity characterizes Basil's concept of inspiration with respect to the authorship of the Scriptures and the divine afflatus in the biblical writers. The Word of God, whose utterance we have in Scripture, is regarded as living, vibrant, instinct with life. As Basil reads the Scriptures the divine voice itself echoes in the chambers of his soul. The Bible is not impassive record but living revelation. It is the living word, the vox Dei. Thus with reference to the opening verses of the Gospels Basil speaks of "the divine voices" and "how accurately and clearly they bear witness to the genesis of the Son before the eons."[2] By the use of the expression, tas theias phōnas, he indirectly invites us to note how God speaks: we can hear the very echo of the divine utterance, for Basil gives it life. In a word, the true author of Scripture is God, and peculiarly so in the hypostasis of the Holy Spirit. "For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Spirit."[3] The verse is an admirable statement of Basil's view of biblical authorship. The truth of this is instanced on every hand. In the same context as the quotation above from Adv. Eun. II:15 Basil refers to "the things told to us by the Holy Spirit through the blessed John."[4] At another point in Adv. Eun.

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[1] H. Weiss (op. cit., p. 38) offers this as a "very important link" in the chain of proofs which goes to show that Basil did not concede divine inspiration to the LXX. But the latter also quotes very loosely at times from NT books the inspiration of which was beyond cavil.

[2] Adv. Eun. II:15/250B.

[3] II Peter 1:21.

[4] Adv. Eun. II:14/249B.
Basil's attitude in these matters is strongly reminiscent of Clement of Alexandria, for instance.

II he speaks of how "John by the mighty voice of the Spirit thunders to you" a passage of his Gospel.[1] In the same work he refers to Paul, "who speaks in the Spirit of God."[2] The Spirit inspires the prophets, and makes lawgivers wise.[3] Moses, who composed the history of creation, "imparts to us what he has learned from God," and the testimony of God himself affirms how the Almighty spoke with his servant "mouth to mouth."[4] In other words, he who wrote the cosmogony did so "in the power of the Spirit."[5] The same promptings so inspired the "prophet" of the Psalter that he could say of himself, "I proclaim to you what the Spirit teaches me, saying nothing that is mine or merely human."[6] To "the great David ... God declared things undeclarable and the secrets of his wisdom."[7] It is out of such devout belief in David's inspiration that Basil rises in his spirited defence of the author of the Psalms against the reproachful assertion that he contradicts himself or that he was conceited.[8] In the case of Paul the divine afflatus conveys itself rather especially through the medium of the Second Person of the Trinity. In the De Jud. 3/215C Basil clarifies a reference to Rom. 1:28 with the parenthetical assertion that the apostle "had Christ speaking within him," and in Adv. Eun. I:12/224E and Hom. in Ps. XLIV:5/163B he uses

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1 Adv. Eun. II:27/263D.

2 Ibid., 19/254D.

3 Hom. XV:3/133B.

4 Hex. I:1/2D.

5 Adv. Eun. I:21/232D.

6 Hom. in Ps. XLVIII:2/178E.

7 Adv. Eun. I:12/224D.

8 Hom. in Ps. LXI:5/198; ibid., VII:6/103.

the same expression. At one point Basil sets forth his concept of authorship in a typically Oriental figure which carries the term "food" as a scriptural metaphor to almost its logical extreme. This is in Hom. in Ps. XLIV:3/161, where he speaks of the prophet of the Psalter as eating spiritual food and therefore emitting (belching forth, eructing) spiritual utterance. The soul, that is to say, lets forth a sound appropriate to the nourishment; since the food was rational and (ethically) good, the prophet utters a good word.

For all the rugged conservatism of his view of inspiration as related to authorship, Basil is thoroughly enlightened in his ideas as to the precise effect which the Spirit's illapse exerts on the human instrument. Basil does not conceive of the latter term in a mechanical but in a musical manner. Thus he calls the Psalmist a lute for the reason that the Holy Spirit moves or uses him.[1] It is in this sense that the Lord, instead of speaking publicly with his own mouth, echoes his message "through the mouths of his servants as instruments" (organoi).[2] For in his more searching references to the relation between inspiration and authorship Basil leaves no doubt that he conceives of the inspired authors as being in full possession of their judgment and faculties. The illapse of the Spirit does not displace their individuality and independence. The balance and sobriety of his position is reflected in the opening words of the homily De gratiarum actione. "You have heard the words of the Apostle, through which he talks with the Thessalonians and legislates for all of life. His teaching was

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[1] Hom. in Ps. XXIX:7/130E; cf. Hom. in Ps. XLV:1/170CD, and ibid., XLVIII:2/179A.

[2] Hom. VIII:8/70D. The musical figure appears as early as the Cohortatio ad Graecos, 8, "the first definite doctrinal exposition of inspiration" (G. D. Barry, The Inspiration and Authority of Holy Scripture [New York: The Macmillan Co., 1919], p. 43).

always to those who happened to be present on such occasions, but the benefit from it spreads over all human life."[1] Paul spoke in terms of the logic of the situation, that is, not in defiance of it. Basil differentiates sharply between inspiration and mania, between the truly spirit-filled servant and a possessed or insane person. There is not a single passage of Basil in which the authors of Holy Writ are in a trance or are beside themselves in any way. On the contrary Basil excoriates Eunomius with the charge that he sees things in Scripture which are not there.[2]

The Spirit and the Word. We have already observed the organic relation between the Spirit and the Word. The Scriptures are "the utterances of the Spirit."[3] That the teachings of the Holy Scripture are the teachings of the Holy Spirit[4] is not to be questioned. As Basil says at one point in preparing to quote Scripture to Eunomius, "We are going to give you the very words of the Holy Spirit."[5] Not only is the illapse of the Spirit the vital inspirational factor in the authorship of Scripture, but the work of the Spirit is equally essential in its reading and exposition. Without the gift of the Spirit, the Word can be neither truthfully enunciated nor properly understood. Basil makes this clear in the letter just referred to,[6] where he inveighs against those who, lacking proper training

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1 Hom. IV:1/24E.

2 Adv. Eun. II:16/251BC; cf. ibid., I:4/213C and II:8/243E.

3 Ep. CCIV:5/305D.

4 Cf. Adv. Eun. II:1/238E-239A.

5 Adv. Eun. II:17/252CD.

6 Ep. CCIV:5/305D.

and qualifications, yet presume to set themselves up in slanderous criticism of him. One of the worst accompaniments of the allegorical vogue was that the untrained believer considered himself to have received the art of mystical interpretation as a special gift of the Holy Spirit and to be qualified to divine the hidden sense which was supposedly at the bottom of the whole OT and partly even of the New. With regard to the force of words, Basil writes, a wholly distorted interpretation frequently results when the critic is inferior to the writer. "The critic ought really to set out with much the same training and equipment as the author." Basil then applies this salutary insight to the Bible. "Even in the case of the utterances of the Spirit," he goes on, "the investigation of the terms is to be attempted not by everyone, but by him who has the spirit of discernment." This, Basil continues, is derived from Paul's teaching on the diversities of spiritual gifts in I Cor. 12:8-10, where the "discernings of spirits" refers to the ability to distinguish true utterances or interpretations from false. The possession of the Spirit is the sine qua non, but the Spirit in extraordinary measure with relation to one of its several endowments. The biblical critic must have a certain additional qualification in the nature of a specialized spiritual gift--that of discerning between valid and spurious treatment of the Scriptures. It is not possible for anyone who is lacking in this peculiar grace to do justice to the Word, much less so for him who has none of the Spirit of God.

Somewhat the same emphasis is found in the homily De invidia.[1] Here Basil takes the hypothetical case of a believer who "excels in judgment and

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[1] Hom. XI:5/96A-C.

has been honored with the word of God, and is an expounder (exēgētēs) of sacred sayings." The reference is clearly calculated to place such an individual in the category of one who is a recipient of the gift of the Spirit in a special way. Again Paul's teaching forms the background of Basil's thought. In the Corinthian passage just referred to Paul is concerned with the testing of spiritual or prophetic utterances. He says that these must not be blindly accepted as infallible revelations. But the opposite extreme must also be avoided. In his first letter to the Thessalonians he warns against quenching the fire of the Spirit "by pouring the cold water of unsympathetic criticism on some glowing soul," as Moffatt aptly puts it. Basil now turns to those in his own day who through malicious envy would "wish to put to silence the interpreter of sacred sayings." This is not to be done if there follows "by the grace of the Spirit" any acceptance and praise from those who hear. The listener is reminded that the benefit he receives is a "gift" which was "sent to thee through the teaching of the brother."[1] Thus does Basil give oblique emphasis to the office of the Spirit in mediating an understanding of Scripture. "No one stops a spring that is gushing forth," he points out. And "when a spiritual utterance gushes forth in church and pious hearts well up with gifts of the Spirit," it should be received with joyful eagerness instead of jealous envy. When the Spirit truly reigns, so to speak, He should have full rein. In short, the uninhibited flow of the Spirit is vital to both the giving and the re-

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[1] Cf. Hom. in Ps. XLIV:3/161E: "Even so the tongue of the righteous man, when the Holy Spirit moves it, writes the words of eternal life on the hearts of believers, dipped not in ink but in the Spirit of the Living God. ... And according to the heart's capacity the Spirit writes more things or fewer, which are apparent to everyone or not according to the heart's preparation in purity."

ceiving of the Word--its full communication.[1]

The discussion of the Spirit and the Word thus far has had particular reference to the deeper, more technical or scholarly, or even controversial investigation of Scripture. But the work of the Spirit is no less important in illuminating it for the ordinary believer. The Nazianzan testifies to this in a vivid allusion to the intensive biblical studies which he and Basil jointly pursued in their Pontic retreat as laymen: "O for the loving labor in the Divine Oracles, and the light we found in them by the guidance of the Holy Spirit!"[2] Basil was later to affirm the immediacy of this guidance for the humble hearers to whom he preached the Hexaemeron. Though he says that he and his flock can hardly hope to fathom the full mystery of the creation, they shall not deserve to be rejected "if, with the help of the Spirit, we do not fall away from the intent of Holy Scripture."[3] The same thought is latent in a brief letter of comfort to a widow, which Basil concludes with the mention that since she possesses the consolation of the Scriptures, "you stand in need neither of my assistance nor of that of anybody else to help you comprehend your duty, having as you do the all-sufficient counsel and guidance of the Holy Spirit to lead you to what is right."[4] It is the Spirit that teaches.[5] And for anyone to attempt to in-

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[1] Just as the Lord in giving his Word echoes it "through the mouths of his servants as instruments," so the soul in receiving it ought to be like "a harmoniously tuned instrument of the promise," so that the Holy Spirit himself can set it in vibration like a psaltery (Hom. in Ps. XLV:1/170D).

[2] Greg. Naz., Ep. VI/P.G.XXXVII:29C.

[3] Hex. II:1/12BC.

[4] Ep. CCLXXXIII/424DE.

[5] Ep. CLIX:2/248C.

terpret Scripture in his own wisdom is to believe himself wiser than the Holy Spirit: Basil is scandalized at the thought.[1] For every believer he felt the reality of the promise, "When he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth."[2] It is not enough that the Spirit has given the Word: nowhere is it more true that "the gift without the giver is bare."

Prophecy and Prediction. Basil's view of the gift and office of prophecy is likewise conspicuous for its soundness and nobility, especially in a day that was cluttered with much self-seeking wizardry and soothsaying. We have already touched upon his standing quarrel with the dreamers and diviners.[3] The fact that they pervert sound teaching, the teaching of the Holy Spirit, is verily the unforgivable sin, and Basil's feud with them is implacable. In Ep. CCX, where he writes under great personal and spiritual stress, his cup of wrath overflows in bitter denunciation. His feelings are so aroused that he finds it impossible to use charitable restraint, describing the purveyors of bad teaching as "shrieking drunken brains."[4] Their crime was that they confused intoxication with inspiration, or else invested the dreams and fancies of their beds with divine sanction. They must have been a sorry lot, but the effect of their mischievous teaching was worse, as pernicious as poisonous drugs. Basil is agitated to safeguard the integrity of both the Spirit and the Word, the sound teaching He has delivered as well as its orthodox interpretation.

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1 Hex. IX:1/81A. Cf. R. brev. I/414C.

2 John 16:13a.

3 Supra, p. 101. Cf. Hom. in Ps. XLV:2/171CD.

4 Ep. CCX:6/317C; cf. 3/314E.

"It is in souls pure and cleansed from all defilement that the prophetic gift shines clear." A distorted mirror cannot give a fair image, and a sullied soul cannot "receive the flashes of the Holy Spirit." As in the case of the sympathetic vibration of strings in a musical instrument--to employ a familiar figure--it is only those whose souls are attuned to the Spirit of the Almighty who receive his Word in prophetic utterance. While the true gift of the Spirit, like every good and perfect gift, is from God, the pseudo-seers of Basil's day "ascribe the gift of prophecy to themselves." Theirs is a lying spirit and it manifests itself in lying prophecies. The Old Testament should teach them the difference between dreams and prophecies. And in the case of the New, "the Gospels need no assistance from dreams to make them credible." So let not these sleepy or sodden fanciers "make their imaginations of more authority than the instruction of salvation." The Word illumined by the Spirit is sufficient and final.

For Basil one of the most important dimensions of prophecy is prediction.[1] In the encomium of the Psalms which opens the Hom. in Ps. I, he not only says that the Psalter includes the excellences of all the other OT writings but begins his reference to its merits with the mention that "it prophesies the future." In the NT too one of the gifts of the Spirit is prescience: "I indeed maintain that even Gabriel in no other way foretells events to come than by the foreknowledge of the Spirit, by reason of the fact that one of the boons distributed by the Spirit is prophecy." Basil goes on to enlarge upon his conception of this peculiar function of the Spirit. "And whence did he who was ordained to announce the mysteries of

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[1] In Ep. CCXXXVI:1/360D prescience and the faculty of forecasting the future are marks of God's omniscience.

the vision to the Man of Desires derive the wisdom whereby he was enabled to teach hidden things, if not from the Holy Spirit? The revelation of mysteries is indeed the peculiar function of the Spirit, as it is written, 'God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit.'"[1] In such a view Basil shared the outlook of his age. The antecedents of his attitude go back to the primitive community of believers. It was natural that the early Christians, convinced that God had spoken in Christ and in Scripture, should seek the evidences of the former in the pages of the latter--which is to say, the OT. This literature the early disciples therefore proceeded to read in the light of their new faith. As on a message written with invisible ink, this light acted to reveal a treasury of heretofore hidden meanings. Passages which had been dark now became luminous with significance. Predictions concerning the life of the church began to emerge. Biographical details about Jesus took shape. Thus the OT became an ur-NT. Interesting evidence of this we find on almost every page of Christian Scripture, especially in such a book as Matthew. And as the mystery and marvel of the relationship between the Hebrew-Jewish Scriptures and the Christian gospel grew on the thinkers of the church, it became to them a seal of the common inspiration of both messages; rather, it was a single revelation. Prophecy also became the seal of inspiration in another sense. The stupendous events, the veritable revolutions which took place before the very eyes of the Fathers could not but foster the conviction in them that God must have prefigured such extraordinary happenings in the record of revelation, for does not that record itself state, "Surely the Lord God will do

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[1] De Spir. S. XVI:38/32E-33A.

nothing, but he revealeth his secret unto his servants the prophets"?[1]

Messianic Prophecy. Impelled by the momentum of the early enthusiasm for the Divine Redeemer, the writers of later Christian antiquity continued to explore and exploit the OT for direct and indirect hints and allusions to the new dispensation. As previously, this concern centered chiefly about the person of Christ, and the OT became in particular a sourcebook of messianic prophecy. Even the heretics joined with the Christians in their readiness thus to quote OT passages. In this all-pervasive usage the three great Cappadocian teachers naturally participated. Most often they find the Hebrew hagiographs prophetically concerned with the broad fact of the incarnation of the divine Logos, but they also discern special features of the life and work of the Messiah, at times enunciated with the admirable exactness of an evangelist. Among the Cappadocian triumvirate Basil is prominent as a messianic interpreter, but it is also he who is distinguished for the comparative moderation and reserve with which he employs the technique. His search for meanings never becomes an irresponsible beating of the bushes for messianic allusions. And the relatively temperate and discreet set of mind which he brings to this area of exposition is reflected in the oft-recurring formulas, phainetai, dokei, tacha. Just as he is cautious about asserting a so-called deeper, hidden sense of Scripture, the wholesome importance which he generally attached to the literal-historical sense protected him from the more violent excesses to which the messianic mode was susceptible. Nevertheless, by most modern standards Basil's exegesis is quite extreme and sometimes radical. In the subject

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[1] Amos 3:7

matter which makes up Adv. Eun. II:18 he finds a fertile field for the exercise of messianic insight. The angel whose voice was heard above the burning bush of Ex. 3:2 is none other than the Angel of Great Counsel in Is. 9:6, that is, the Son. And in the passages of Gen.-Ex. where both angel and God are indicated, "the Only-begotten is the one who is declared here, manifesting himself from generation to generation to men and proclaiming the will of the Father to his own saints." Referring to Ex. 3, Basil then speaks of how in the time of Moses the God-Word, i.e., the Son, named himself as existing. In other words, not only did he pre-exist, but he pre-revealed himself in the OT. No part of it is beyond the scope of Basil's messianic interest. In the Hexaemeron, for instance, he unhesitatingly refers to Is. 5:1b as having been spoken by Christ.[1] Farrar says that in common with the Fathers generally Basil interprets the "stone cut out without hands" in Dan. 2:34 of the virgin birth of Christ.[2]

But it is particularly the Psalms that are pregnant with messianic meaning. Even the most radical and thoroughgoing of the Antiochian exegetes, Theodore of Mopsuestia, did not dare to deny them this quality. According to Basil one of the salutary merits of the Psalms is their "foretelling the advent of Christ in the flesh."[3] He finds the messianic element in all the Psalms which he interprets except the first and the 114th. Examples of how he discerns the Spirit speaking prophetikōs in these writings need not be multiplied indefinitely.[4] In the case of Ps. 48:16,[5]

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1 Hex. V:6/45E.

2 F. W. Farrar, History of Interpretation (Bampton Lectures), p. 346.

3 Hom. in Ps. I:2/91C.

4 Cf. H. Weiss, Die gr. Kapp. ... als Exegeten, pp. 79ff.

5 All OT references in this paragraph are according to the LXX.

"Nevertheless God shall ransom my soul out of the hand of hades when he takes hold of [or receives] me," Basil declares: "Clearly [the prophet] is prophesying the descent into hades of the Lord, who along with the souls of others shall also redeem the prophet's soul that it may not remain there."[1] Frequently however Basil is far from being so dogmatic. Inasmuch as at the baptism of Jesus his Father's approval was bespoken in the "voice from above" (cf. Matt. 3:17), Basil feels that Ps. 28:3a, "The voice of God is upon [epi] the waters," marks the baptism as being "perhaps more mystical."[2] His concern at this point is very likely related to the discussion of Gen. 1:2c in Hex. II:6, where he presents the interpretation of a certain Syrian as suggesting the Hebrew to mean that the Spirit of God brooded over the primordial waters. Of Ps. 33:7a, "This poor man cried, and the Lord heard him," Basil says with notable restraint that it can also (dunaton kai) be referred to Christ and his poverty.[3] Likewise, alluding to Ps. 40:18a, Basil remarks in R. brev. CCLXII that "David confesses he is poor and needy, perhaps [tacha] saying this in the person of the Lord, who is called poor according to the saying, 'Though he was rich, yet for our sakes he became poor.'" Psalm 7:7a, "Arise, O Lord, in thy wrath; be lifted up in the bounds of my enemies," Basil first interprets to mean that the prophet is praying that the mystery of the resurrection may already enact itself unto the remission of sins; or, the prophet may mean the elevation upon the cross; the phrase even suggests to some, he broadmindedly adds, still an-

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[1] Hom. in Ps. XLVIII:9/186D.

[2] Hom. in Ps. XXVIII:3/117E.

[3] Hom. in Ps. XXXIII:5/147E.

other meaning which he goes on to indicate.

Basil finds a particularly strong messianic element in Ps. 44 (LXX), especially in that it is inscribed as an "ode concerning the beloved." While the church has always recognized in the Psalm this deeper significance, actually it is without doubt a royal nuptial poem. Basil however "spiritualizes" it down to virtually the last detail. Nor does he except the superscription. In translating its opening word in the Hebrew, lam^{e}naççēach, the LXX in common with the other ancient versions was completely at a loss and derived from a kindred root the meaning, eis to telos.[1] Basil makes much of the clause here and elsewhere.[2] What is in the Hebrew a simple rubric becomes in the Greek a reference to the summum bonum, man's highest good. In the case before us he seizes upon the opportunity afforded by the Greek rendering to give not so much an eschatological but a teleological cast to the Psalm--it is concerned with man's end in the sense of perfecting him in the future destiny which he is forging while here on earth. After setting forth in orderly presentation matters concerning humankind, Basil says, the prophetic word comes to the suffering of Christ in vs. 9.[3] Interpreted as a marriage hymn the passage depicts the garments of the bridegroom as saturated with the costly scents of myrrh, staktē, and cassia. Basil warms to the messianic significance of the spices. "That myrrh is a symbol of burial the evangelist John has taught us when he says that Christ was buried by Joseph of Arimathaea with myrrh and aloes." Staktē

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[1] Kirkpatrick's commentary in the Cambridge Bible series, p. xxi, n. 1.

[2] Cf. Hom. in Ps. XLVIII:1/177BC, where he cites what are surely the readings of Theodotion, Symmachus, and Aquila as agreeing with his own understanding. Cf. Augustine, Enarrationes in Psalmos IV, VI, VIII, IX, XI, etc.

[3] Hom. in Ps. XLIV:9/166B-D.

and cassia are not quite so easily adapted to Basil's exegetical presupposition, and his approach in the case of the latter term is distinguished by a commendable reserve. Perhaps it might be (mēpote), he suggests, that through this term the text profoundly and wisely hints at (parēnixato) the suffering on the cross. In the previous sentence he has referred to how the cassia bark encircles its wooden stem, and this conjures up the image of Christ's body similarly enveloping the cross. "Thus you have myrrh with respect to the burial, staktē with respect to the descent into hades (for every stagōn goes downward), and cassia with respect to the divine economy of the flesh enveloping the wood."[1]

Types and Symbols.[2] New Testament realities were prefigured not only directly through the more or less literal meaning of the OT, but also in an indirect manner through such forms as types and symbols. In the case of types, the area of concern is again largely messianic, and the attitudes and techniques employed by the interpreter furnish important evidence as to his concept of inspiration. The Greek word tupos properly denotes the mark, print, or offset left by the impress of the original, which is there-

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[1] In R. brev. CCLI Basil indulges a rather obscure and complicated piece of exegesis which concerns the subject of prophecy. Asked how it is that in one place the Lord forbids the carrying of purse etc. (Lk. 10:4) and in another commands it (Lk. 22:36), Basil answers: "The words, 'But now let him that hath a purse take it' (or rather 'he will take it'[arei], for so most copies have it), are not a command but a prophecy of the Lord, who says beforehand that the apostles were about to dare even to take a sword, forgetting the gifts and the law of the Lord." Thus it is that we find the Lord telling Peter to put up his weapon "after the fulfillment of the prophecy concerning the sword"--the fulfillment evidently being the disciple's action in severing the ear of the high priest's servant. Basil justifies his interpretation with the observation that "it is clear from many passages that Scripture often uses the imperative mode of speech for the prophetic, as in 'Let his sons be orphans,' 'Let a slanderer stand at his right hand,' and the like."

[2] Cf. Henri de Lubac, "Sens spirituel," Recherches de science religieuse, XXXVI (1949), 542-76.

fore rightly the antitupos. The NT however often inverts and generally ignores this logic, and the resulting looseness or confusion in usage undoubtedly favored the Fathers as they busied themselves to extract ever more instances out of the OT in which persons, events, and institutions in the New are portrayed by anticipation. Especially when there was any disposition to outdo themselves if not one another, the Fathers exhibit more ingenuity than edification, and the relationship between the principals in the comparison is sometimes tenuous to the point of the fanciful. Ephraim accepted an enormous number of types, while the Antiochians were more conservative. Origen referred the OT types not simply to events in the evangelical history but to heavenly, eternal conditions, so that the types are not representations of real conditions but types of types, as it were. Gregory of Nazianzus generally manifests a healthy moderation in the frequency and nature of his resort to this exegetical mode. In his discussion of the typical character of the Law and especially of the passover lamb, he exhibits the suspicion or at least the caution which marks his attitude toward the so-called spiritual interpretation in general: "I believe that Moses arranged nothing blindly and thoughtlessly, ... but I also believe that if you descend into the particulars and small things it is difficult to show for every shadowy outline the spiritual counterpart."[1] Gregory of Nyssa is much more bold, especially in his Life of Moses. He piles supposed type upon type, and makes the mistake criticized by the Nazianzan of exploring even the smallest peculiarities of an alleged type. The Nyssenian

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[1] Orat. XLV:11/P.G.XXXVI:637AB. "That is possible only to those who in virtue and knowledge come near to Moses," Gregory continues in a statement which is a parallel to Basil's emphasis as set forth on p. 102 supra.

is in fact so radical that compared with him on this score, H. Weiss declares, Origen may be called a simple and sober expositor.[1]

"With such an almost rudderless sailing about upon the somber waves of the OT for the purpose of capturing a large booty," Weiss continues, "Basil, the chief of the Cappadocians, will have nothing to do at all." Striking confirmation of this is to be found in chap. XIV of the De Spiritu Sancto, where Basil engages a brief but revealing "incidental discussion" of typology. The occasion for this interesting digression is the claim of the Pneumatomachi that inasmuch as in olden time some "were baptized unto Moses,"[2] he being a mere man, we have no right to infer the divinity of the Holy Spirit from the fact that we are baptized into him. Basil's answer constitutes a statement as to the nature and purpose of types which for soundness and clarity even excels anything offered by the Antiochians. He introduces his reply by pointing out the basic distinction between faith in the Spirit and faith in Moses: the former is the same as faith in the Father and the Son, while the latter is merely faith in a shadow and type. Basil then proceeds to a kind of definition of types. "The nature of the divine is very frequently represented by the rough and shadowy outlines of the types; but because divine things are prefigured by small and human things, it is obvious that we must not therefore conclude the divine nature to be small. The type is an exhibition of things expected, and gives an imitative anticipation of the future." By way of illustration he presents a number of OT types which nearly all bear the approval of NT usage. Thus

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[1] H. Weiss, op. cit., p. 88.

[2] I Cor. 10:2.

Adam is a type of the future Messiah (Rom. 5:14c). So was the rock which marvelously refreshed the fathers (I Cor. 10:4), while the water was "a type of the living power of the word" (Jn. 7:37b). "The manna is a type of the living bread that came down from heaven [Jn. 6:51], and the serpent on the standard a type of the passion of salvation accomplished by means of the cross [Jn. 3:14], wherefore they who even looked thereon were preserved." The exodus as a type of those who are being saved through baptism is so full of significance that it becomes virtually an allegory.

> For the firstborn of the Israelites were preserved, like the bodies of the baptized, by the giving of grace to them that were marked with blood. For the blood of the sheep is a type of the blood of Christ, and the firstborn a type of the first-created. ... And the firstborn were preserved by God from being touched by the destroyer to show that we who were made alive in Christ no longer die in Adam. The sea and the cloud for the time being led on through amazement to faith, but for the time to come they typically prefigured the grace to be. "Who is wise and shall understand these things?"--how the sea is typically a baptism bringing about the departure of Pharaoh, in like manner as this washing causes the departure of the tyranny of the devil. The sea slew the enemy within itself, and in baptism too our enmity toward God dies. From the sea the people came out unharmed: we too, as it were, alive from the dead, step up from the water saved by the grace of him who called us. And the cloud is a shadow of the gift of the Spirit, who cools the flame of our passions by the mortification of our members.

Basil is now prepared to make his point with telling effect.

> [Were we] in each case to prejudice the dignity of our privileges by comparing them with their types, not even one of these privileges could be reckoned great. Then the love of God, who gave his only-begotten Son for our sins, would not be great and extraordinary, because Abraham did not spare his own son; then even the passion of the Lord would not be glorious, because a sheep typified the offering instead of Isaac; then the descent into hell would not be fearful, because Jonah previously typified the death in three days and three nights. The same prejudicial comparison is made also in the case of baptism by all who judge the reality by the shadow, and, comparing the typified with the type, attempt by means of Moses and the sea to disparage at once the whole dispensation of the gospel.

Similarly Moses, the intercessor, is also a type of Christ, the mediator between God and men, and certainly our faith in the Lord is not a trifle "because it was signified beforehand through Moses." This leads Basil to

enunciate the conspicuously sane and spiritual concept of typology with which he climaxes his excursus:

> For [God] spares our weakness, and in the depth of the riches of his wisdom and in the inscrutable judgments of his intelligence used this gentle treatment fitted for our needs, gradually accustoming us to see first the shadows of objects and to look at the sun in water, to save us from dashing against the spectacle of pure unadulterated light and being blinded. Just so the Law, having a shadow of things to come, and the typical teaching of the prophets, which is a dark utterance of the truth, have been devised as exercises to train the eyes of the heart, in that hence the transition to the wisdom hidden in mystery will be made easy.[1]

On the basis of "this truly lofty conception of the divine economy of salvation" H. Weiss concludes that Basil is at one with the Antiochians in holding the OT types not to be accidental but to have been planned and purposed by God from the beginning. The occurrence of the OT shadow and its correspondence with the NT reality does not belong in the category of the coincidental or the fortuitous. Thus does Basil signally enhance his theory of inspiration by asserting a vast profundity and hidden resourcefulness in the two Testaments which answers to a divinely purposed relationship between them.

During the course of the next chapter of the De Spiritu Sancto (XV) Basil is led into a discussion closely related to the foregoing by way of retracing his steps. This new parenthesis is in fact hardly less concerned with typology than with symbolism, though the latter is perhaps the principal theme. Basil devotes par. 35 to setting forth the symbolical and typical significance of baptism, important inasmuch as for perfection of life the imitation of Christ is just as necessary in respect of his actual death as on other scores. "How then are we made 'in the likeness of his

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[1] Cf. the allegory of the cave in Plato.

death'" (Rom. 6:5)? "In that we were buried with him by baptism" (Col. 2:12a). This symbolical death intervenes to put an end to the old person so that a man may be born again unto newness of life. Basil next raises and answers another difficulty. "How then do we achieve the descent into hell? By imitating through baptism the burial of Christ," in which case baptism "symbolically signifies the putting off of the works of the flesh" (Col. 2:11b-12a). Nor do we repeat our washing at each defilement as do the Jews, for "the death on behalf of the world is one, and so is the resurrection from the dead [cf. Eph. 4:4-6], of which baptism is a type." "For this cause the Lord, who is the Dispenser of our life, gave us the covenant of baptism, containing a type of life and death, for the water fulfills the image of death and the Spirit gives us the earnest of life." Thus light is thrown on the reason for the association of the water with the Spirit: "The water receiving the body as in a tomb represents death, while the Spirit pours in the quickening power, renewing our souls from the deadness of sin unto their original life." "Thus in three immersions and with three invocations the great mystery of baptism is performed, to the end that the type of death may be fully figured and that by the tradition of the divine knowledge the baptized may have their souls enlightened."[1]

Otherwise Basil's resort to symbolism is quite rare and restrained. It is difficult to follow Puech when he says that in the Hexaemeron "the vegetables even become symbols;"[2] about the only venture Basil makes in

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[1] In Ep. CCLX:3f./396Cf. Basil discusses briefly the typology of the number seven. With reference to Luke 2:34c, he defines a sign as being "indicative of something strange and obscure which is seen by the simple but understood by the intelligent;" the sign par excellence in Scripture is the cross (ibid., par. 8).

[2] Puech, op. cit., III, 258.

this direction is in Hom. V:5 when he says: "As to the darnel and all those bastard grains which mix themselves with the harvest, the tares of Scripture, far from being a variety of corn, have their own origin and their own kind; image of those who alter the doctrine of the Lord and, not being rightly instructed in the word but corrupted by the teaching of the evil one, mix themselves with the sound body of the church to spread their pernicious errors secretly among purer souls." In V:6 the mention of the vine, "which serves to remind you of your nature," launches Basil into a rather full allegorical exposition of this celebrated biblical figure.

The Unity and Harmony of Scripture. As Basil sees it, a fundamental unity and harmony pervades the whole of Scripture. It could not be otherwise in the nature of the case. After all, a single revelation is set forth; it is everywhere God-inspired. Through the kaleidoscopic pattern of personalities and periods the same Spirit breathes. Convincing demonstration of this is beheld in the area of prophecy and fulfillment. Despite all appearances to the contrary, an agreement prevails between the Old and New Testaments which, like the delivering up of Jesus, has its origin and explanation in the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God. Basil's insistent emphasis that all Scripture be obeyed to the utmost is a corollary of his conviction of the unity of God's law: "...The commandments are joined one to another according to the sound meaning of Scripture so that if one be broken, the others are of necessity also broken."[1] Such is his principal thesis in the Ascetica, as pointed out earlier. Utterly despondent in the De Jud. over the discord prevailing in the church, Basil seems to glory the more in the concord pervading the Scriptures. "So that it is

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[1] Pref. to R. Fus. 2/328D.

possible for anyone who wishes ... to take up the Old Testament and learn for himself the harmony of all God-inspired Scripture":[1] so Basil declares after explaining that he had had to confine himself to the NT in choosing scriptural passages to illustrate the Moral Rules. In sum then, Basil believes the whole of Scripture to be characterized by a fundamental integrity as an inescapable consequence of its common and equal inspiration throughout. This is reflected in his indiscriminate resort to all portions of Holy Writ as of the same unquestioned validity and authority. In a passage already noted which he introduces by saying that he is going to give his adversaries the very words of the Holy Spirit, he continues: "Let us take from the Gospel the quotation, 'In the beginning was the Word,'[2] and from the Psalm a passage spoken as coming from the person of the Father, namely, 'Out of the womb before the daystar I begat thee.'[3] Putting the two together, we may say that he [the Son] both was and was born."[4] That is to say, the two widely separated passages--separated in origin as well as intent--are equally inspired parts of the same organic revelation. They can thus be reduced to a common exegetical denominator because of the divine logic which pervades them. In such manner all Scripture is on a par. It seems that Basil's position here is precisely parallel to that of Paul in his concept of the many members in one body. Not all parts of the body are equally useful or equally beautiful, but all are equally necessary and important. All of Scripture does not have the same attraction or the same

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1 De Fide 6/230A.

2 John 1:1a.

3 Ps. 109:3c (LXX): cf. infra, pp. 192f.

4 Adv. Eun. II:17/252D.

utility for Basil, but it is all part of the same body of truth and therefore equally valid.

For while Basil upholds the unity of the Testaments, he does not regard them in the light of a dead uniformity. Their full harmony does not imply their complete sameness. Just as he enunciates a thoroughgoing doctrine of inspiration without running afoul of the extreme of literal infallibility, so he declares the unity of the whole of Scripture without abandoning himself to a complete lack of discrimination. In both cases he exhibits that gifted sense of moderation and balance which marks him as one of the most enlightened interpreters of his day. His position is that all Scripture is of equal inspiration, but it is not all of equal usefulness and practical value.[1] Basil seems to have had a clearer sense than his predecessors of the imperfection of the Law in relation to the gospel.[2] We have already noted how he refers to the shadowy character of the OT types and symbols as compared with their reality in the New. He is aware of our Lord's differentiation in the words, "Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, ... but I say unto you...."[3] Whereas Basil is emphatic "that one must observe all things without omission that have been delivered by the Lord through the gospel and the apostles,"[4] he is quite contemptuous

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[1] A locus classicus on this point occurs in Ep. XLII:3/127E, and although the letter is suspect, the following comports fully with Basil's view: "Never neglect reading, especially of the New Testament, because very frequently mischief comes of reading the Old, not because what is written is harmful, but because the minds of the injured are weak. All bread is nutritious, but it may be injurious to the sick. Just so all Scripture is God-inspired and profitable and there is nothing in it unclean: only to him who thinks it is unclean, to him it is unclean."

[2] W. Sanday, "The Value of the Patristic Writings for the Criticism and Exegesis of the Bible," Expositor, XI (1880), 434; cites L. Diestel, Gesch. d. A. T., p. 123.

[3] Matt. 5:21a ... 22a.

[4] Moralia XII:3/246BC.

of such OT injunctions as the prohibition against eating pork. "It seems ridiculous to me that anyone should make a vow to abstain from swine's flesh," he writes in Canon XXVIII. "Be so good as to teach men to abstain from foolish vows and promises. Represent the use to be quite indifferent. No creature of God received with thanksgiving is to be rejected. The vow is ridiculous; the abstinence unnecessary." Similarly he confutes Apollinarius because "he has written about the resurrection from a mythical or rather Jewish point of view, urging that we shall return again to the worship of the Law, be circumcised, keep the Sabbath, abstain from meats, offer sacrifices to God, worship in the Temple at Jerusalem, and be altogether turned from Christians into Jews. What could be more ridiculous? Or rather, what could be more contrary to the doctrines of the gospel?"[1] Basil in fact very early arrived at this sense of the superiority of the NT, for already in the De Fide, product of his profound biblical study in the Pontic retreat, he uses Paul's figure in I Cor. 13:11 to describe the immaturity of the OT in comparison with the New: "And such progress and improvement did I make in the comprehension of things divine that the knowledge which is concerned with the Jewish worship seemed like the movements of a child's mind, but the knowledge which comes through the gospel was fitting for a man in every respect grown up."[2] Thus in effect Basil acknowledges a progressive revelation in Scripture. The OT is inferior not as being uninspired and therefore untruthful, but in the sense that it is fulfilled in the New. His feeling is better expressed poetically than log-

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[1] Ep. CCLXIII:4/406E f.

[2] De Fide 2/225E.

ically: "Superfluous are the lamps at sunrise; the Law fades, the prophets are silent as soon as the truth shines forth."[1]

Basil's Preferences among the Books. Among the books of the OT Basil exhibits a distinct preference for the Psalms. "Everything is stored in the Book of the Psalms as in some vast treasury open to all the world."[2] In them he finds included all that is profitable in the other books. They foretell the future, they recall histories, and they legislate for our life, but Basil is especially impressed with the practical nature of their content and benefit, their everyday moral usefulness. Hardly less remarkable is the fact that the inspiration of the Spirit is beheld not only in their teaching but also in the musical form in which it is cast. Basil is artist enough to be intrigued by this characteristic, though it is as moralist that he evaluates it. "Because the Holy Spirit saw that mankind is hard to lead toward virtue and because we neglect the right life in our bent toward pleasure, what does he do? The pleasure of melody did he mix with the doctrines, so that through the favorable and smooth impression

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[1] De Spir. S. XXI:52/44E-45A. The thought is developed logically in the context of the quotation: "He who abides in the bare sense of the letter and in it busies himself with the observances of the Law has, as it were, got his own heart enveloped in the Jewish acceptance of the letter, like a veil; and this befalls him because of his ignorance that the bodily observance of the Law is done away by the presence of Christ, in that for the future the types are transferred to the reality. ... He on the contrary who has been empowered to look down into the depth of the meaning of the Law and, after passing through the obscurity of the letter, as through a veil, to arrive within things unspeakable, is like Moses taking off the veil when he spoke with God. Such a person too turns from the letter to the Spirit. So the obscurity of the teaching of the Law corresponds with the veil on the face of Moses, and spiritual contemplation with the turning to the Lord. He then who in the reading of the Law takes away the letter and turns to the Lord--and the Lord is now called the Spirit--becomes moreover like Moses, who had his face glorified by the manifestation of God."

[2] Hom. in Ps. I:2/91C.

upon our hearing we would accept the benefit of the teachings imperceptibly, just as the wise physician sugar-coats the pill. It is for this reason that the harmonious tunes of the Psalms have been invented for us, so that the young in age and in general those who are youthful in character may appear to be singing while they are actually being trained in their souls."[1] Even if the exordium which we have been citing left any doubt of it, Basil's partiality for the Psalter would be abundantly clear from the numerous quotations from it throughout his writings.

The NT however is the summit of God's revelation and as such the object of Basil's peculiar regard. The Gospels and especially the sayings of Jesus are in a class by themselves. "Every utterance of the Gospels excels in magnificence the other teachings of the Holy Spirit, inasmuch as in the others He spoke to us by his servants the prophets, but in the Gospels the Lord himself [autoprosōpōs] has held converse with us."[2] Out of the entire range of Old and NT Scripture it is "the actual words of our Lord Jesus Christ in the gospel, the utterance of him who is about to judge the living and the dead, which have more weight with the faithful than all other narratives and arguments."[3] Thus in formulating the scriptural proofs which he attaches to the Morals, Basil can abandon his intention of using Old as well as NT citations; he confines himself to the New not from a feeling that the OT can be disregarded but with the assurance that it is contained in the New. This principle is even carried a step further. The supremacy of the Saviour's utterances, taken in the light of "the harmony of all

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[1] Hom. in Ps. I:1/90CD.

[2] Hom. XVI:1/134A.

[3] De Jud. 8/221E.

inspired Scripture," means that "for the faithful who are convinced of the truth of the Lord's words one saying is enough."[1] Though among the books of the NT the Four Gospels are primary, Basil gives the pre-eminence unmistakably to John. He it is who is the trumpet-tongued, uttering things beyond human hearing and the understanding of man.[2] With reference to the gospel accounts of the Incarnation, Basil says that Matthew was the exegete of the birth according to the flesh, Mark made the preaching of John the beginning of his account, Luke approached the theology from the standpoint of bodily beginnings, but "the evangelist John, coming last, and raising his mind above everything felt by sense and above time which seems to accompany such phenomena--or rather elevated by the power of the Spirit--approached the very One who transcends all."[3] For Basil the utterance of John clearly carries above the gospel messages that had preceded him. If we take such a representative work as the De Spir. S. this preference is strikingly demonstrated. As compared with some fifteen more or less direct quotations from Matt., three from Mk., and six from Lk., almost all of the foregoing from the first half of the respective Gospels, the Book on the Holy Spirit contains about fifty-nine citations from John, fairly well distributed.[4]

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[1] De Fide 6/229D-230A.

[2] Hom. XVI:1/134AB.

[3] Adv. Eun. II:15/250BC.

[4] There are approximately seventeen citations from Acts. A sizeable number is taken from the epistolary section Romans through Hebrews, all of which Basil regarded as Pauline. Romans was evidently the favorite epistle of Basil, and seventeen of the forty-four quotations from this book come out of its eighth chapter. Two other passages which appear to have especially engrossed him are I Cor. 12 and Col. 2:8-3:11. There seem to be no quotations or allusions in the De Spir. S. from James, II and III John, Jude, or Revelation.

The Authority of the Bible. Basil's conception of the authority of the Bible must be considered against this entire background. His sense of the immanence of the living Spirit in the Scriptures is so profound that through them God veritably speaks to him viva voce, with the living voice. As the vox Dei, the Bible is the ultimate arbiter, and proof from it is final. It provides the supreme sanction. "Let God-inspired Scripture decide between us; and on whichever side be found doctrines in harmony with the word of God, in favor of that side will be cast the vote of truth."[1] This is in fact the sum and substance of Basil's position in all his writings. Thus to Eunomius, who denies the essence of the Son to be the same as that of the Father by insisting that the Son was created in time, Basil puts the question, If the Son were created in time, how then does the Scripture say that all things--including time--came into being through him (John 1:3)? If what Eunomius says is true, the Scripture is likewise false which says that "the eons were made through Him" (Heb. 1:2).[2] By way of a rhetorical question to Eunomius Basil sums up the matter: You have nothing to bring against the evidence (phōnas, "voices") of the Gospels, in which we have believed.[3] Such is Basil's life-long emphasis, and examples of it could be multiplied from almost any page of his writings. But it is especially in the early and pivotal corpus of writings known as the Ascetica that he reveals himself as pre-eminently the biblicist. Here he undertakes to construct both an ethic and a practicum upon the most uncompromising biblical basis. He engages this objective with a passion and a rigor which have

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[1] Ep. CLXXXIX:3/277B.

[2] Adv. Eun. II:13-14.

[3] Ibid., 15/251A.

rarely if ever been surpassed. Basil identifies the ascetic or monastic mode with the ideal Christian life. Theoretically he has a single gospel, the same morality, for monks and laity alike,[1] but it is only in the life of renunciation and withdrawal that Christian discipleship in all its perfection, the only true Christian life, can be lived. It is from this standpoint that he draws up his basic code of evangelic discipline in the Ethics or Morals. Here we have a catalogue, however unsystematic, of the duties which apply to all Christians, though of course it has particular reference to those who are bending all their effort toward spiritual perfection--the monks. In the introductory De Jud. we have seen how Basil was impelled to launch his whole ascetic system from the premise that all sins are strictly equal before God. This insight, revolutionary for Basil, seems to have been one of the outstanding results of his biblical investigations in the Pontic retreat. In pars. 4 and 8 of the De Jud. and even more clearly in R. brev. IV, XV, and CCXCIII he affirms that in neither the Old nor the NT is it possible to discover the least distinction between a serious sin and a minor one. The obligation to obey God in all things, and in particular to observe all the commandments of Christ, is absolute. This is his fundamental thesis. Its corollary is the equality of all sins and their punishment, both conceived in the same rigorous terms. To violate a single precept is to violate all of them, and thus equal condemnation falls upon every act of disobedience. Certainly this bears eloquent testimony to Basil's devoted submission to the authority of Scripture. "His ascetic writings afford us, probably, the best instance in history of a serious and

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[1] Amand, L'ascèse monastique ..., p. 84, n. 142; p. 169, n. 97; p. 268; etc.

thorough attempt, guided by Scripture alone, to put in practice the morality which [it inculcates]."[1] Basil indeed pushes his cult of the Bible to the logical extreme when he declares that every word and every act "should be confirmed by the testimony of God-inspired Scripture,"[2] and conversely that whatever "is outside God-inspired Scripture, being not of faith, is sin."[3] This bibliocentricity is forcefully demonstrated in the very style of the Ascetica, the content of which is so thoroughly scriptural that it is hardly more than a congeries of quotations, incidents, expressions, and turns of phrase taken from the Bible. In a word, here is the authority of the Word raised to virtually the nth degree. Compared with the scriptural factor, the elements of Greek philosophy in Basil's asceticism, while admittedly strong, are decidedly secondary in importance. Their effect is not to be denied, as Amand and others have made abundantly clear,[4] but it is an indirect and surreptitious one. Though steeped in the Greek tradition, Basil had rejected categorically "the foolish wisdom of the world" and yielded himself completely to a biblical discipleship. Thereafter it was more in spite of rather than on account of his attitude toward secular culture that this factor appears at all. Again, it is similarly true that Christian doctrine and ecclesiastical dogma are important sources of the Basilian ascèse, but these are always presented in biblical garb. To be sure, Basil is so far from claiming any right to go beyond Scripture that he deems it necessary to apologize for using non-biblical terminology. The

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[1] R. T. Smith, St. Basil the Great, p. 216.

[2] Mor. XXVI:1/256B.

[3] Mor. LXXX:22/317D.

[4] Cf. e.g. P. Henry, Les états du texte de Plotin, p. 166.

Bible is the rule of life, it is the standard of faith and morals, it is the source of doctrine. It constitutes the supreme regula in all spheres. To Basil the Bible is not problem but answer: "desirous of keeping to perfection all the commandments of God and of Christ, he rejoices to find them in their entirety in the books of the two Testaments, assembled in a corpus and recorded under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit."[1]

In Basil then we have a brilliant Father who gave to the Bible something of that ultimate authority and deference which Romanism accords to the church. Not so much the zeal of his Father's house as the zeal of His Word consumes him. In his exaltation of the Bible he is somewhat of an archetypal Protestant.[2] This is strikingly instanced in his inculcation of the right of private judgment with respect to Scripture in proposition LXXII:1/306B of the Morals, which concerns "hearers". Clarke feels that the term indicates lay people who visited the monastery with a view to edification,[3] but could it not as well refer to the monastic brethren of R. brev. CCXXXV "whose duty it is to defer and obey"? In any case the proposition states that "such hearers as have been instructed in the Scriptures should test what their teachers say, receiving what agrees with the Scriptures but rejecting what disagrees, and on the latter score sternly decline dealings with those who persist in such teachings." The thesis reflects a

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1 Amand, L'ascèse monastique ..., p. 265.

2 Basil has a marked nostalgia for the life of the primitive church and for the joyful fervor of the first disciples. "The reader of the Ascetica is struck by the conscious repetition of three verses of the Acts of the Apostles [2:44, 4:32, and 4:35] which describe the enthusiastic and overflowing life of love of the early Christian community of Jerusalem, where all goods were shared in common" (ibid., pp. 128f.; cf. Hom. VIII:8/71A). "'Enthusiasm' for [Basil] meant the reproduction of the first ages of the Church, when Pentecost was a living memory and the baptized were all filled with the spirit" (Clarke, The Ascetic Works ..., p. 44).

3 Clarke, ibid., p. 125. Cf. R. brev. CLXXXV and Clarke ad loc. The term probably refers to novitiates in training for the monastic life.

liberalism that is rather startling in a fourth century Father. It is the more notable in that generally a man "must accept whatever is chosen for him by the superiors": their word is law.[1] True, Basil's statement in Mor. LXXII must be interpreted against a contemporary background in which false teaching and unscriptural innovation were working havoc among the faithful. But the fact still remains that he ventures the bold step of making the conscience of the believer the ultimate seat of authority. Rather, it is the Bible interpreted by the Spirit-filled conscience. Important light is thus thrown upon his whole concept of inspiration and of the relation between the Spirit and the Word. The Spirit who is the inspiration of Holy Writ and at the same time the birthright of the born-again can be relied upon to reveal authoritative truth in the devout conscience, and this should be accepted even in defiance of vested interest or constituted authority. This daring premise is echoed in both the Longer and Shorter Rules. Here as a matter of fact the perennial problem of the relation between freedom and authority ecclesiastically is raised in terms which have present-day overtones. Where should the ultimate seat of authority be? Faced with the question in the form of "those who do not accept the regulations of the superior," Basil answers in R. fus. XLVII/393D: "If a man does not accept the decisions of the superior he must gainsay him publicly or privately, if he has any strong reason on his side consonant with Scripture, or else keep silence and do what he is told. But if he is too shy to speak let him use others as intermediaries for this purpose, in order that if the command be contrary to Scripture he may deliver both him-

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[1] R. brev. XCVI/449B; cf. R. brev. CCXXXV.

self and his brethren from harm; but if it be shown to have good reason on its side then he may free himself from vain and perilous doubts." Treating of the same question in the Shorter Rules (CXIV/455A), Basil sums up the matter by stating that "when we receive an order from anyone that is contrary to the commandment of the Lord, or destroys or corrupts it, then it is time to say, 'We must obey God rather than men.'" It is in the same mood that the great Cappadocian concludes R. brev. CI/451B, replying to a query concerning Matt. 5:42: "Why cannot a man come to a right decision for himself?" Likewise "one must not be dragged away by those who feign the truth, easily and without examining their credentials, but one must investigate each man with the help of the test given by Scripture."[1]

That Basil depended upon the inner illumination of the Spirit as the ultimate scriptural sanction is likewise reflected in his attitude toward difficulties and obscurities in the Word. Read your Bible carefully, he says in effect to Amphilochius, and the problems will solve themselves.[2] The help needed is to be received primarily from the Spirit who is the source of Scripture. The basic principle with Basil is that Holy Writ is its own best interpreter. "Hear how Scripture explains itself"--words spoken to the Lenten congregation who heard the fourth homily on the Hexaemeron--may be taken as one of his watchwords.[3] The Spirit can ever be counted on faithfully to fulfill his office of illumination and guidance when the pious soul turns to the Word, and thus all passages are brought to

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[1] Mor. XXVIII/257D.

[2] Ep. CLXXXVIII, Canon 16/276B.

[3] Hex. IV:2/34A.

bear in organic relation to the one in hand. "What seems to be said in an ambiguous and veiled way in certain passages of God-inspired Scripture is made plain by the obvious meaning of other passages."[1] When in doubt Basil habitually seeks light in the Scriptures themselves. And as for gaps and perplexities respecting which no enlightenment is forthcoming, his attitude still remains constructive. Thus, by the silence of Moses in passing over certain details of the cosmogony, "the history wishes to train the activity of our intelligence, giving it a weak point for starting, to impel it to the discovery of the truth."[2] In the next homily Basil writes concerning a certain characteristic of the creation account, "It is not that it begrudges us the knowledge of the truth, but that it may kindle our desire by showing us some trace and indication of the mystery [of the Only-begotten]."[3] Related to this is the kind of obscurity which Scripture deliberately employs in order to cloak a mystery: here again it "makes the meaning of 'dogmas' difficult to be understood for the very advantage of the reader."[4] Basil's faith that the inspiration of Scripture is complete and purposive never wavers.

But it is subject to some severe strain. Sometimes the position of Basil is so charged with dogmatism that it almost breaks under its own tension. We do not refer primarily to the kind of contradiction exhibited by Mor. LIV:2/274BC on the one hand, "That one should feel no hesitation over things allowed by the Scripture," and Mor. XXXIII:3/259Eff. on the other,

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1 R. brev. CCLXVII/506E; cf. Hex. II:6/18B.

2 Hex. II:3/14E.

3 Hex. III:2/23BC.

4 De Spir. S. XXVII:66/55Ef.

"That though an action or word may be allowed by the Scripture, yet it must be avoided if others are confirmed in sin by something similar or are shaken from their desire for good."[1] Rather let us take Basil's concept of the equality of all sins. By this means he is seeking to deprecate legalistic distinctions, but the rigor of his thought is so unyielding that it inevitably leads to a certain inconsistency. If all sins are equal, it follows that their punishments should be--and such indeed is Basil's thesis. Yet the Canonical Letters (CLXXXVIII, CXCIX, and CCXVII) present a penitential system based upon the inequality of sins. The varying degrees of penalty prescribed involve a clear distinction between transgressions. Thus after noting that widowhood is inferior to virginity, Basil remarks in Canon 18/ 291C, "Consequently the sin of widows is much less than that of virgins." In the first of the Longer Rules Basil faces the question "whether there is any order or sequence in the commandments of God, so that one comes first, another second, and so on; or whether all are interdependent and may be regarded as equally important so far as making a start goes, so that anyone who desires may be safe in beginning at any point in the circle he likes." Basil answers in terms of our Lord's summary of the divine law (Matt. 22:36-40 conflated with Mk. 12:28-31) that the command to love God is the greatest, and concludes: "On the basis of what has been said and from similar passages contained in the God-inspired Scriptures, it is possible to learn the order and sequence of all the Lord's commandments." It is somewhat this concept which must lie behind his penitential system. Perhaps his position was that all sins are equal before God but not necessarily be-

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[1] Cf. R. brev. I/414DE, and Mor. V:3/239A.

fore man. But if all sins are strictly equal before God, must not the commandments, the violation of which constitutes sin, also be? It is true that in R. fus. I Basil is concerned with whether the divine commandments are all equally important "so far as making a start goes," not specifically so far as their gravity or their violation and punishment goes, but ultimately there can be no valid distinction. That Basil's doctrine of the equality of all sins is radical admits of hardly any question. Clarke notes that Bellarmine (Garnier, II, xxxvi) doubted the genuineness of the Rules inasmuch as such a position could not be ascribed to Basil.[1] Dom D. Amand is so labored and repetitious in treating of this same Basilian doctrine that he too seems to be struggling against a psychological or religious block of some kind in the face of the flagrantly un-Roman, non-legalistic assertion that there can be no degrees of sin. Is it with the censor librorum in mind that he writes: "Pour satisfaire les théologiens, je puis concéder qu'après tout, Basile a bien pu, même dans sa doctrine monastique, admettre l'existence de divers degrés de gravité parmi les péchés des moines. Il a pu le penser -- c'est une pure possibilité dont je doute, -- mais, en tout cas, dans aucune de ses oeuvres authentiques conservées, il n'a exprimé cette opinion."[2] In any event Basil preserves quite unimpaired the vitality if not the logic of his doctrine of the inspiration and authority of Scripture. When all is said and done, the Bible remains uniquely and supremely the Word of God.

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[1] Clarke, The Ascetic Works ..., p. 342, n. 3.

[2] Amand, L'ascèse monastique ..., p. 168, n. 95. In n. 97 on p. 169 Amand calls us to observe "the enormous difference which separates this Basilian ascetic morality, designed principally for the monks, founded upon the Old and New Testaments, and completely based upon the abstract idea of sin, from the theological morality of the contemporary manuals which, being essentially casuistical, set up a precise and minute catalogue of the various sins and their various degrees of gravity."

ADDENDUM C
The Authenticity of the Commentary on Isaiah

The Commentary on Isaiah I-XVI has important bearing upon the subject of inspiration but is unfortunately suspect. In spite of the MS attestation of the work its authenticity has been a matter of much controversy, involving as it does complex problems of internal and external criticism. Erasmus rendered a negative verdict on its genuineness, largely on stylistic grounds (cf. his Enchiridion militis Christiani [Basel, 1519], pp. 295-308). The Commentary did not appear in the printed general editions of Basil until 1618; the 1638 reprint of this edition contained a refutation of the objections of Erasmus, the work of the Carthusian friar Geoffroy Tilmann in his 1556 printing of the Commentary. In the early eighteenth century Garnier placed the disputed writing among the dubia in the Appendix to his first volume and devoted sixteen folio pages of his Preface (pp. xlvii-lxiii) to a vigorous exposition of his reasons. His arguments are mainly stylistic, linguistic, and doctrinal. In the absence of other independent work they have probably had undue weight, although modern criticism confirms the stylistic divergence between the mass of crude, raw material which makes up the Commentary--an indigesta moles, Amand calls it--and the finish and polish of Basil's undisputed writings. Garnier also notes the strange silence of Gregory of Nazianzus as well as the more surprising fact that Jerome in his commentary on Isaiah avoids any mention of authorship on the many occasions when he cites the work in question and even translates more or less literally from it. (Writing a few years before Garnier, Tillemont, who accepted the Commentary, remarked on p. 292 of vol. IX of

his historical Memoires that "certain manuscripts state that it was published by a priest after the death of the Saint, [which may account for its having been unknown to St. Jerome.]") Garnier further points out borrowings from Eusebius of Caesarea, though Devreesse (Rev. bib., XLII [1933], 146) answers that this objection falls of its own weight; thus Basil expresses himself in terms similar to those of Eusebius in the homilies on the Psalms. On the other hand phrases from the disputed commentary appear in the two Basilian homilies On Youth. Without directly answering Garnier, Maran (III, clxxix-clxxxii) upholds the Basilian authorship of the writing on the grounds of likelihood. It must be admitted that it has resemblances to the undisputed works of Basil, and the internal evidence is such (e.g. the fact that in chap. X Anomoeanism is presented as a heresy of recent origin) that the most skeptical criticism concedes that it might have been written during the latter part of the fourth century, and by a Cappadocian. Fessler (Patr., I, 522), who considers the work doubtful, conjectures that we may possibly have here the rough material of an unfinished work on Isaiah, based mainly on Origen. The Commentary passed for authentic in the time of John of Damascus.

In our own day two valiant attempts have been made at its rehabilitation. The first, published in 1922, was undertaken by J. Wittig (Des hl. Basilius d. Gr. Geistliche Übungen auf der Bischofskonferenz von Dazimon 374/5 im Anschluss an Isaias 1-16 [Breslau: G. P. Aderholz]) in the form of a rather elaborate hypothetical construction. He sees in the Commentary a series of "spiritual exercises" or addresses commenced by Basil at Caesarea and continued in an episcopal conference at Dazimon (modern Tokat; Eps. CCXII, CCXVI) near the upper Iris in the years 374-5 (cf. Sanday, Exposi-

tor, ser. I, XI [1880], 434, who thinks the Commentary "an early work") in which Basil avails himself of the text of Isaiah as a framework for answering the accusations of his enemies; these discourses were taken down stenographically by one of his companions in travel and edited shortly thereafter. Bearing on the latter suggestion is the fact that the Hexaemeron was delivered extempore, and in Ep. CCXXIII:5 Basil refers to the presence of the shorthand writers of Eustathius "at my side the whole time I was dictating." Oskar Ring ("Das Basiliusproblem," ZKG, LI [1932], 378) echoes Wittig to the extent of agreeing that the form of the commentary as we have it derives from the notebook of one of his pupils rather than from Basil himself, but adds in a note that although Wittig has proved that there is genuine Basilian thought in the commentary, the solution he proposes "is entirely too artificial, as Altaner has shown (Byzantinisch-Neugriechische Jahrbücher, III [1922], 426f.)." And while A. Jülicher (Th. Lit., XLVII [1922], 361-4) contends strongly for the authenticity of the Commentary against Garnier, he repudiates Wittig's thesis with some severity though with equal justice. Nor has it found substantial favor otherwise (cf. e.g. Devreesse, op. cit.). The second modern attempt at rehabilitation, which appeared in 1932 as part of a study by P. Humbertclaude (La doctrine ascétique de saint Basile de Césarée [Paris: G. Beauchesne], pp. 4-27), has fared no better. Stéphanou (Echos d'orient, XXXIII [1934], 238-40) is sympathetic in his approach but unenthusiastic in his appraisal, and Amand (L'ascèse monastique ..., p. 30; cf. p. 175, n. 104) doubts that the effort will convince any competent critic. It may turn out that the Commentary on Isaiah bears somewhat the same relation to Basil as the Pastoral Epistles do to Paul.

The Greek text of the Commentary, with Italian translation, has lately been published in Italy by Sac. Pietro Trevisan in attractive two-volume format (San Basilio: Commento al profeta Isaia. 2 vols., "Corona patrum salesiana"; Torino: Società Editrice Internazionale, 1939). The contents, however, are a complete disappointment critically. At the outset the editor-translator declares that he does not intend to treat of textual criticism (nor of authenticity), and refers to the "accurate edition" of Garnier-Maran in defence. Outside of this mention, the only other reference of a textual nature is a four-line "advice" or postscript to the Introduction stating that "the Greek text here reproduced is that of Garnier (with few changes, mostly orthographic) edited by Maran and published at Paris by Gaume in 1829 [sic]."

C h a p t e r V

SCRIPTURE AND TRADITION

The Twofold Source of Doctrine. In connection with Basil's profound conviction of the unique place of the Scriptures as the rule of life, we noted their primacy for him also as the source of doctrine. Thus in Ep. CLIX:2, a brief but rather important doctrinal affirmation on the Holy Spirit, Basil writes that since the question of the consubstantiality of the Third Person has remained unexplained because in former times there was no dispute about it, he now "will add a statement according to the sense of Scripture," postponing a fuller explanation until in a face to face meeting he can furnish "fuller testimony from the Scriptures." Similarly in Ep. CV he writes: "If ever the Lord grant us to meet, I will discourse to you further concerning the faith, to the end that you may perceive at once the power of the truth by scriptural proof and the rottenness of heresy." Again, he solemnly warns against anyone who teaches heterodoxy "and does not accede to the sound words of the faith, but thrusting aside the oracles of the Spirit makes his own teaching more authoritative than the lessons of the gospel."[1] He assails the theological writings of Apollinarius because they are not founded on scriptural proofs but on human arguments.[2] His quarrel with the Arians was a constant protest against the "novel and un-

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[1] Ep. CCLXI:3/403B.

[2] Ep. CCLXIII:4/406E.

familiar doctrines which they allege to be deduced from the teaching of Scripture."[1] The eyes of their understanding being darkened, they cast away the simplicity of the faith and substituted their own idle constructions for the ministry of the Holy Spirit in illuminating the Word. It was not that Basil rejected extra-scriptural teaching and practice in the form of tradition. His insistence was that that tradition has to be amenable to Scripture and to the inspiration and usage of which it is a part--usage, that is, which is divinely sanctioned by the Spirit. "We do not rest only on the fact that such is the tradition of the Fathers," Basil argues in one place, "for they too followed the sense of Scripture and started from the evidence which, a few sentences back, I deduced from Scripture and laid before you."[2] It is in such terms that Basil makes his well-known statement about the tradition of the apostles having "the same force" as Holy Writ.[3] Basil's doctrine of the place of tradition may be said to derive from his conception of the office of the Holy Spirit as the inspirational dynamic in Scripture. The tradition of the Fathers is conceived as the lengthened shadow of the tradition of the apostles--which is Scripture. God wrote on the hearts of men before they wrote on paper, and continued to do so thereafter. For this reason it is hardly the case with Basil, as Luther remarked of the Fathers generally, that because they wielded too much authority, the Bible has suffered.[4] Origen for instance placed great value upon tradition and was convinced that its influence upon exegesis was justified, but here

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[1] Ep. CCLXI:1/401C.

[2] De Spir. S. VII:16/13E.

[3] Ibid., XXVII:66/54D.

[4] Luther, Colloqu. II:159, cited by Farrar, Hist. of Interp., p. 471.

again his disciple Basil showed characteristic independence of thought and judgment in his decidedly moderate estimate of tradition.

In principle, then, Basil fully and frankly admitted the validity of tradition alongside Scripture; in practice his use of Scripture dwarfs his resort to tradition. But the place of tradition was by no means of merely academic concern for him. It was bound up with the desperate realities of the moment. As he explains frequently, total war was being waged on the orthodox party by the Arians as a whole and by the parties into which they were divided. Behind a variety of lesser pretexts, the real object of their attack was the faith itself. Every means at their disposal was cleverly employed. In their strategy they remind us of modern propagandists whose techniques are duplicity and deceit, and who often seem to be at their best when fraudulently using the weapons and resources of those they assail. Thus instead of openly trampling scriptural faith underfoot, the heretics exhibited a solicitous regard for Scripture. Evidently convinced that the best defence was offence, they met the accusation of being unscriptural by hurling it back with greater force, and bolstered their fraud by a great show of scruple for the written revelation and a servile adherence to its letter. The Arians at Nicea had objected to the homoousion as unscriptural, and this refusal to go beyond the letter was characteristic of their confessions. No innovators they, but the true "scriptural" party--as Dr. Newman sarcastically calls the Homoeans.[1] "They find a cloak for their impiety in their love of the letter," said Gregory of Nazianzus of the here-

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[1] Cited by C. F. H. Johnston, The Book of Saint Basil ... On the Holy Spirit, p. 59, n.

tics in general.[1] "Like the debtors--of course bona fide debtors," says Basil, "they clamor for written proof, and reject as worthless the unwritten tradition of the Fathers."[2] It is Basil who represents the mind of the church as she "took her stand on the spirit of the Apostolic writings as interpreted by Apostolic tradition."[3] He presents as both apostolic and scriptural his belief that we should abide by the unwritten traditions.[4] It is apostolic because Paul himself delivered unwritten ordinances (paradoseis) to the Corinthians, whom he later praised for keeping them (I Cor. 11:2). It is scriptural because the apostle also admonishes the Thessalonians to "hold to the traditions [paradoseis] which you were taught by us, whether by word of mouth or by letter" (II Thes. 2:15). Note that the oral word of tradition is here plainly as important as the epistle or incipient scripture which enshrines part of it. Basil seems to possess a rather marked awareness that the whole gospel revelation was once tradition--was in fact first tradition. In this he anticipates the modern form- or rather tradition-critical school of biblical scholarship with its emphasis upon the unwritten character of the pericopes which constituted the pre-literary gospel. For us the significant fact is that Basil bases the authority of extra-scriptural tradition upon the same spiritual sanctions which validate Scripture. It is impliedly the same elements in the origin and nature of

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[1] Orat. XXXI:3/P.G.XXXVI:136B; cf. Ullmann, Gregor von Nazianz (Darmstadt, 1867), p. 381.

[2] De Spir. S. X:25/21C.

[3] H. B. Swete, On the Early History of the Doctrine of the Holy Spirit ... (Cambridge: Deighton, Bell, & Co., 1873), p. 37, n. 2.

[4] De Spir. S. XXIX:71/60A.

the written tradition which give validity to extra-biblical doctrine and usage. However, Basil's resort to Scripture as compared with tradition is overwhelming. Indeed, as H. Weiss says, Basil's statement about Scripture and tradition having the same force "cannot possibly permit a safe judgment as to his position respecting tradition."[1] Prominent in Weiss' mind no doubt is the simple consideration that almost all of the De Spir. S. is devoted to the argument from Scripture (and to some extent from philosophy); only pars. 66-67 and 71-75 are devoted to the argument from tradition. Throughout the rest of Basil's writings the balance is even more lopsided in favor of Scripture. It is only theoretically that the two sources of faith may be said to have the same force for him.

A Locus Classicus on Tradition. As the principal utterance of Basil on the subject of tradition, the paragraphs of the De Spir. S. just indicated merit close scrutiny. Basil begins his excursus in par. 66 with the observation that "of the dogmata and kērugmata which obtain in the church the latter we possess from written teaching, the former we have received 'in a mystery' [or as mysteries][2] from the tradition of the apostles which has been disseminated among us: both of these have the same force in relation to true religion." Were we to attempt to limit ourselves to what is

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[1] H. Weiss, Die grossen Kappadocier ... als Exegeten, p. 23.

[2] This passage and its context is one of the most notable references in the Fathers to the "disciplina arcani," a relatively modern term for the practice which prevailed in the third- and fourth-century church of treating its more central rites as secrets to be jealously guarded from "those outside" and even from catechumens. The "secret discipline" strongly reflected the influence of the Mysteries. The awe that belonged to these, and even their terminology, were transferred to Christian rites: thus those admitted to full Communion were spoken of as "the initiated." Vide Edwin Hatch, The Influence of Greek Ideas and Usages upon the Christian Church (Hibbert Lectures, 1888), Lecture X; Edward T. Horn, "Arcani Disciplina," Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics, I, 675a-676a.

written, abandoning ancient forms and customs merely because they have no direct support in Scripture, we should inflict mortal injury upon the gospel as well as upon its preaching. Basil then gives several examples of time-honored traditional practices, such as the invocation used at the blessing of the Eucharistic elements, adding, "For we are not content with what the apostle or the gospel has recorded, but we add a preface and an epilogue which we have received from unwritten teaching and which we consider to be of great import in celebrating the mystery." If we confined ourselves to the lex scripta of the faith we should also be forgetting an important practical consideration, namely "that the awesome dignity of the mysteries is best preserved by silence"--by that "unpublished and secret teaching" which keeps them beyond the reach of "curious meddling and inquisitive investigation." Moses was aware of this truth and applied it in the legislation which restricted the Tabernacle to fewer and fewer persons the nearer the Holy of Holies was approached. Familiarity breeds contempt, Basil is saying, and "this is the reason for our tradition." Just as we have a kērugma the essence of which is proclamation, so there is a dogma which is kept secret: the obscurity in Scripture is one form of this silence. Basil continues with his main argument in par. 67 by pointing out that if the baptismal confession of faith which both he and his adversaries recognize is valid and essential, then it is only consistent in accordance with the same confessional to render the ascription of glory "to the Father and to the Son with the Holy Spirit":[1] if Basil cannot furnish written authority for this form of the doxology, neither can his opponents for the

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[1] Such is the immediate thesis which the De Spir. S. is devoted to proving.

accepted form of the confession. Basil reiterates the same point as he recurs to the argument from tradition in par. 71, and goes on to repeat his conviction that it is "apostolic to abide also by the unwritten traditions": in support he quotes I Cor. and II Thes. as already noted. Basil now proceeds to consider the usage he is defending, "... with/and the Holy Spirit," in the light of the specific witness of the Fathers. Of the many who support it, "some coupled the words of the doxology by means of the preposition, others by means of the conjunction, yet were thought in no way injuriously to affect orthodoxy." As for himself, he remarks incidentally, the expression was passed on to him as a cherished legacy by his fathers, particularly Dianius. In par. 72 he cites the usage of Clement of Rome, Irenaeus, Dionysius of Alexandria, and Eusebius of Caesarea, mentioning Dionysius of Rome by name only. Par. 73 is devoted in the main to the testimony of Origen, who provides an instance of how "the powerful influence of tradition frequently impels men to contradict their own views [dogmata]," while par. 74 deals chiefly with "the great Gregory," one of whose institutions was the very form of the doxology now disputed. "How then can I be an innovator and creator of new terms," Basil concludes in par. 75, "when I adduce as originators and champions of the expression in question whole nations, cities, custom going back beyond the memory of man, men who were pillars of the church and conspicuous for all knowledge and spiritual power?"

In par. 75/64A, by way of summation, Basil draws his discussion together in a form which may be said to constitute a definition of tradition. "Well-disposed persons will find a satisfactory defence in what I have said, that I accept an expression so dear and so familiar to the saints,

and confirmed by such long usage, inasmuch as from the day when the gospel was first preached up to now it is shown to have been generally recognized in the churches, and, what is of greatest moment, to have been accepted as bearing a sense in accordance with piety and true religion." Here are contained in noteworthy statement and balance the distinguishing marks of trustworthy tradition. They are three in number and are given in ascending order of importance. The first characteristic of authentic tradition is confirmation by long usage. If an expression or practice is so time-honored that it has become dear and familiar to the saints, it may in such measure be presumed to have the aegis of the Spirit. However, that is not necessarily so, and to this qualification must be added a second, namely, recognition or acceptance by the church as a whole. A merely local usage may be at best a questionable peculiarity or at worst a dangerous perversion. The "consensus patrum" is even more important than the consensus implied in long usage, but when the two agree, their concurrence is a powerful consideration in favor of the tradition in question. Nevertheless the expression or practice may still lack the third and most important credential, acceptance as bearing a sense in accord with piety and true faith. Some of the tenets which Basil was combatting had the sanction of considerable length and breadth of usage, but they lacked the all-important third dimension: they were not in accord with sound faith, they did not harmonize with the basic regula which is the norm of true piety. Now what is this criterion of orthodoxy, this standard which is the ultimate test of faith? We cannot say that it is tradition alone or even primarily, for that would be to argue in a circle. It can only be the Bible in the final analysis. Here is the indisputable revelation of God--already enjoying confirmation

by long usage, possessing universal acceptance in the church, and being per se the God-inspired oracles. Certainly no expression or usage which is contrary to Scripture could claim recognition as tradition for a moment. But where the same Spirit who speaks in the Scriptures manifests himself in a custom or phrase for which no express warrant can be found in Scripture, the concurrence of the three factors mentioned marks it as of true apostolic validity. Authentic unwritten tradition can never violate the written revelation but rather fulfills it. The Scriptures must be our starting-point. What Basil is saying is that they do not have to be our end-all as well.[1] A significant insight into Basil's fundamental attitude may be furnished by the statement concluding par. 65 (i.e. introducing the discussion of tradition in pars. 66ff.) that he now intends "to trace the origin of the word 'with,' to explain what force it has, and to show that it is in harmony with Scripture."[2]

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[1] Cf. Johnston, op. cit., pp. 126f. He notes that par. 65 of the De Spir. S. "is used in Philaret's Longer Catechism of the Eastern Church," and gives in English translation some of the questions and answers which introduce the Basilian material. The catechetical passages quoted are highly relevant to the foregoing discussion, as e.g. Question 23, "Must we follow holy tradition, even when we possess holy Scripture?" "We must follow that tradition, which agrees with the divine revelation and with holy Scripture, as is taught us by holy Scripture itself." The catechism then quotes II Thes. 2:15.

[2] Basil proceeds rather to discuss the subject of tradition. Has there been any tampering at this point? In par. 65 he continues a discussion of "in" and "with" and concludes by saying that it remains for him to analyze the latter term; he begins par. 68 by announcing that "the force of both expressions has now been explained": meanwhile in pars. 66-67 nothing of the sort is attempted. But for this digression par. 65 leads directly into 68. Could it be that the projected analysis of "with" has been displaced by the excursus on tradition? It is difficult to attribute such a displacement to a mind and method as logical as Basil's. Perhaps this consideration lends force to the question raised by Erasmus as to the authenticity of the De Spir. S. from chap. XVII on and above all in respect of

We have said that Scripture is the primary source of doctrine for Basil, and that the Spirit is the vital inspirational dynamic in the Scriptures. Basil conceives of the same Spirit as investing the utterances of the Fathers with divine sanction. Thus "the three hundred and eighteen who met together without strife [at Nicea] did not speak without the operation of the Holy Spirit."[1] The consideration is thereby emphasized that it is the Holy Spirit which is the common denominator of Scripture and tradition: hence their equality in principle. The presence of the Spirit is the sine qua non; in its absence the divine sanction vanishes. So that the Arians cannot claim this sanction merely by giving lip service to the Scriptures. Nor can they level accusation at the orthodox, who employ tradition in the true Spirit and apostleship. But when all is said and done, for Basil the Spirit has declared himself most freely and fully in the written oracles of

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this very section XXVII:65ff., which he rejected in toto (Letter Dedicatory to his Latin translation in the Greek editio princeps of Froben, Basle, 1532). Erasmus based his case upon the rather philosophical aspect of chaps. XVIIff. and upon a certain change of style, most apparent from XXVII onward. Regarding this latter section Puech agrees that the very large part accorded tradition alongside Scripture is both surprising and unique among the genuine works of Basil (op. cit., III, 294); he also notes that none of the traditional usages mentioned in XXVII:66 are found in the other authentic works (ibid., p. 293, n. 1). While admitting that the arguments of Erasmus are by no means lightly to be brushed aside, modern scholarship does not follow the great humanist. Against him is the fact that John of Damascus quotes the treatise as the thirty chapters to Amphilochius, while the Syriac paraphrases employed by Johnston push the integrity of the work back to about a century after its origin. "The peculiar care taken by St. Basil for the writing out of the treatise, and for its safe arrival in Amphilochius' hands, and the value set upon it by the friends of both make the forgery of half the present book, and the substitution of it for the original within that period, almost incredible" (Johnston, op. cit., p. 126). "So that if one were tempted to rehabilitate the thesis of Erasmus," says Puech (op. cit., III, 293, n. 3), "it would be on the basis of an assumption of interpolations rather than of the rejection of the entire conclusion of the treatise." (Cf. Fessler-Jungmann, Institt. Patrol. I, 509.)

[1] Ep. CXIV/207C.

God. Klose goes so far as to say of Basil that "tradition is of value to him only when it is justified by Scripture."[1] H. Weiss points out that this is to overstate the case.[2] As Lewis notes, Basil himself plainly indicates that there is no scriptural warrant for the practices described in De Spir. S. 66/54E, 56A, and 56D.[3] But Klose is correct in his intuition that Scripture has a definite primacy for Basil in relation to tradition. Weiss sums up the matter fairly when he declares that "in the main Basil seldom appeals to tradition, and then only when scriptural proof does not seem to be sufficient."[4] All in all Basil is a biblicist rather than a traditionalist.

The Ancient Deposit and Novelty. But while the primary accent is on Scripture, Basil is concerned that the ancient heritage be preserved inviolate no less in its traditional than in its scriptural formulation. Thus when he confutes the Sabellians, Arians, and Anomoeans with the statement that the paradosis prevents us from sundering the Spirit from the Father and the Son, he expands his declaration to embrace "tradition" in the fullest sense: "This the Lord taught, the Apostles preached, the Fa-

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[1] Klose, Basilius d. Gr. ..., p. 6, quoted by H. Weiss, op. cit., p. 24.

[2] H. Weiss, op. cit., p. 24.

[3] G. Lewis, trans., Basil the Great ... on the Holy Spirit (revised ed.; London: Religious Tract Society, n.d.), p. 124, n.

[4] H. Weiss, op. cit., p. 24. Quite the reverse of this is the position of Basil's friend Gregory of Nazianzus, to whom tradition is virtually more indispensable than the Bible. While Basil occupies a sound and moderate middle ground, Gregory may be said to represent one extreme, the other of which is set forth in the short Hom. ad cal. S. Trin. (par. 4/611D) attributed to Basil: "Believe the written words: to that which is not written pay no regard." This is so alien to Basil that it is a strong reason for assigning the homily to the suppositia, where Garnier places it.

thers preserved, and the martyrs confirmed."[1] When Eunomius brazenly prevails upon his readers to ignore the authority of the great and worthy who have given us the traditional formulations, Basil exposes his seduction for the specious fraud that it is. If we were to disavow the Christian witness over the centuries, he counters, if we were to have less regard for a tradition observed by the saints than for the impious novelties of Eunomius, the latter's power would be greater than that of the demon who with all his artifices has not been able so far to ruin the authority of this tradition.[2] Here we have enunciated one of Basil's constant concerns--the peril of innovation. Novelty and tradition are both extra-scriptural, but they are two vastly different matters, failure to discern which is the root of no end of mischief. The former is unscriptural, the latter fulfills the written revelation. The one is heretical, the other always faithful to the ancient deposit. Whence does Eunomius get his notions, Basil asks further on. Is it from the common understanding?[3] Quite the contrary; hence their heresy. Basil is the avowed enemy of novelty. We have already seen how he commends the example of the LXX translators for their circumspection in transliterating certain Hebrew names rather than risk innovating. We have noted his reiteration of the fatal hazards of indulging novelties by either adding to or taking away from Scripture. So great is his deference to the authority of the ancients as contained in the common deposit that it amounts almost to a self-imposed censorship when it comes to unscriptural

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[1] Hom. Contra Sabellianos etc. (XXIV) 6/194CD.

[2] Adv. Eun. I:3/210D-211A.

[3] Ibid., 12/224CD.

or non-traditional utterance. Thus at the very beginning of Adv. Eun. he states that "if all those upon whom the name of our God and Saviour Jesus Christ has been invoked were minded to introduce nothing into the truth of the gospel, but satisfied themselves with the tradition of the apostles and the simplicity of the faith, there would be no need of any treatises at this time, and even now we should have still honored the silence which we have adopted from the beginning."[1] He ends his three treatises against Eunomius on the same note: "It is the part of the devout intellect to be on guard against attaching to the Holy Spirit terms which have been passed over in silence in the Holy Scriptures."[2] Dating from somewhat the same period is Ep. XXIII, having to do with the training of a convert to asceticism. In this letter, according to Batiffol, "Basil seems to shrink from the thought of substituting a discipline of his making 'for the maxims of the holy fathers and their written expositions.'"[3] This stand is affirmed in Ep. CXL:2: "Now I accept no newer creed written for me by other men [than the Nicene], nor do I venture to propound the outcome of my own intelligence, lest I make the words of true religion merely human words; but what I have been taught by the holy Fathers, that I announce to all who question me." The same thought is unmistakable in a brief letter probably written less than five years before his death. In answer to a request that he write concerning the faith, Basil answers flatly that "I have no wish to leave behind me a treatise on the faith or to write various creeds, and so

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[1] Adv. Eun. I:1/207A.

[2] Ibid., III:7/278D.

[3] P. Batiffol, Anciennes littératures chrétiennes (2d ed.), p. 255.

I have declined to send what you asked." He concludes by calling on all who trust in Christ "not to busy themselves in opposition to the ancient faith, but, as we believe, so to be baptized, and as we are baptized, so to offer the doxology." "It is enough for us to confess those names which we have received from Holy Scripture, and to shun all innovation about them. Our salvation does not lie in the invention of appellations, but in the sound confession of the Godhead in whom we have professed our faith."[1]

Theoretically or from our vantage point the issue was sharply drawn, but as a matter of fact the contemporary situation was desperately confused. To the believer of the fourth century the battle loomed as anything but the clear contest between "the apostolic proclamation of faith" and "the successful novelty of the day" which Basil perceived it to be.[2] This, the basic issue, was rather concealed in a welter of confusion propagated by the Arians, who cleverly employed all the artifices of linguistics and sophistics to gain their ends. As noted before, their procedure had many points of similarity to the subtle techniques of deceit employed in the ideological controversies of our own time. In his day too Basil had to be on guard continually lest anyone "be shaken by the opposition of those who wish to ascribe to us strange doctrines, or often falsely attribute their own errors to our views in order to steal away the simple-minded."[3] Just as it is the custom of unscrupulous propagandists today to accuse an opponent of the sins which are their stock-in-trade, so Basil was speedily ac-

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[1] Ep. CLXXV/262Ef. Cf. Eps. CCXLIV:2 and CXXV.

[2] Ep. CV/200A.

[3] De Fide 5/229A.

cused of "innovation" when he employed the doxological ascription in the form sun tō hagiō Pneumati,[1] and his adversaries struck their characteristic pose as the friends of Scripture. Behind the petty exactitude of these men about syllables and their quibbling over words was no honest purpose to enlighten, but a mischievous design to demonstrate that the variation in the prepositions used in the doxology implies a variation in nature among the three Persons of the Godhead.[2] This is the fallacy which the De Spir. S. is devoted to exposing.

> They are charging me with innovation [Basil writes about the same time in a letter], and base their charge on my confession of three hypostases, and blame me for asserting one Goodness, one Power, one Godhead. In this they are not wide of the truth, for I do so assert. Their complaint is that their custom does not accept this, and that Scripture does not agree. What is my reply? I do not consider it fair that the custom which obtains among them should be regarded as a law and rule of right reasoning. If custom is to be taken in proof of what is right, then it is certainly competent for me to put forward on my side the custom which obtains here. If they reject this, we are clearly not bound to follow them. Therefore let God-inspired Scripture decide between us; and on whichever side be found doctrines in harmony with the word of God, in favor of that side will be cast the vote of truth.[3]

Mere custom (sunētheia) smacks of novelty and is a far different matter from tradition: the difference is found by reference to Scripture. To be sure, Basil was now and then carried by the momentum of his argument and the depth of his feeling to so extreme a position that he was involved in contradiction. Thus, forgetting that one of the chief complaints of the Arians was that the word consubstantial (homoousios) was not in Scripture, Basil assails Eunomius for substituting for the word Father in reference to

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[1] De Spir. S. I:3.

[2] Ibid., II.

[3] Ep. CLXXXIX:3/277DE.

the Deity a term which suits him better but which is unscriptural, namely, the Unbegotten. Generally however the test of Scripture which Basil employed with such finality was also used with consistency. It was not his writings but those of Apollinarius which lacked scriptural proofs.[1] It was not Basil but the Pneumatomachi who stopped their ears at the mention of Scripture.[2] "Who today," asks Basil, "has the hardihood to renew that old dogma of Valentinus with the help of sophistical arguments and of course"--he adds with a touch of sarcasm--"scriptural evidence?"[3] Nevertheless the ghost of Valentinus still walked in "novel and unfamiliar doctrines allegedly deduced from the teaching of Scripture."[4] Basil's appeal was to "all those whose soundness of character leads them to hold the dignity of antiquity to be more honorable than mere new-fangled novelty, and who have preserved the tradition of their fathers unadulterated."[5] His stand was unequivocal and uncompromising: "These, brethren, are the mysteries of the church, these are the traditions of the Fathers. We charge every person who fears the Lord and is awaiting God's judgment not to be carried away by sundry doctrines. If anyone teaches a different doctrine, ... rejecting the words of the Spirit, ... of such an one beware."[6]

Terminology and Innovation in Adv. Eun. Basil's position in this whole area of tradition, terminology, and innovation receives particularly

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[1] Ep. CCLXIII:4/406E.

[2] De Spir. S. XXI:52/44A.

[3] Ep. CCLXI:2/402C.

[4] Ibid., 1/401C.

[5] De Spir. S. VII:16/13C.

[6] Ep. CCLXI:3/403B.

full expression in the second of the three genuine treatises against Eunomius. It is near the beginning of Book II that Basil enunciates the method he intends to use in controverting his adversary, although the technique and the argument characterize the trilogy as a whole. "What manner of examination would be more just," he asks, "than to compare what [Eunomius] says with the teachings given us by the Spirit" (238E-239A)? Basil proceeds to the fray with this weapon, and wields it relentlessly. He immediately confronts Eunomius with a question which invokes the witness of both tradition and Scripture. "Which of the saints ever called the Christ gennēma or poiēma [a creature born or made]? What passages of the Scripture has he to prove it" (239A)? In using such a verse as Acts 2:36, "Let all the house of Israel know that God has made [epoiēsen] this Jesus Lord and Christ," Eunomius should be well aware that the verb means "revealed," "set forth," "appointed," and that he has no right to twist it into a verbal noun. Just because Holy Writ says epoiēsen about the Father, we have no right to say poiēma of the Son. "Whatever is not befitting the Only-born, the Holy Spirit has indicated by silence," and poiēma is nowhere used of the Son in Scripture. The orthodox vocabulary and terminology contained in God-inspired Scripture must be scrupulously respected. A little later Basil asks Eunomius what there was to prevent him from using the evidence of Scripture to correct the false notions of those weak in the faith (241E) instead of taking advantage of this weakness, as it were, to spawn errors by innovating. Basil now turns his attention to the other term. By what authority does Eunomius derive designations not sanctioned by the divine Spirit, calling the Son gennēma? "Whence did he receive [the term]? From what teaching? What prophecy? Which of the apostles ever gave this name

to Him? Nowhere in Scripture do I find usage of such a kind" (242DE). Eunomius however boldly employs the innovation as if he had received it from some divine teaching. It is deplorable for anyone who has been trained in Godly fear to employ sophistics as a principle of exegesis--to derive weighty novelties from the flimsy sequence of words (as the term gennēma from egō sēmeron gegennēka se, for example); such a person ought the more to find satisfaction in the terms used by Scripture and to abide by them (243BC). Basil goes on to emphasize the importance of respecting biblical usage in language already familiar (243C-E). Referring to the awe exhibited by the LXX translators toward the names of God, he points out that far from innovating, they did not even dare translate these words lest they blur the lucidity of the common understanding of them by the impropriety of their rendering. "Bear in mind Christ's tribunal," he solemnly warns, "and know the risk of subtracting from or adding to what has been handed down by the Spirit. Do not covet the distinction of innovating but rest content with what has already been proclaimed by the saints. That which common custom or scriptural usage has accepted--is it not utter insanity to tamper with this?" Abide by the ancient deposit in Scripture and tradition because the Spirit gave it and the saints have acknowledged and spread it. In other words, there is no conflict between the tradition as a whole and the written part of that deposit. As Basil says a few sentences later (244B), "I think both that common usage has dishonored this term [gennēma] and that divine Scripture shuns it as well, particularly with reference to the Only-begotten Son of God." It is to be rejected as alien on both scores, for both are one. In Adv. Eun. II:20/256A it is on the same twofold basis that Basil accuses Eunomius of committing a crime with

respect to the name of the Only-begotten by "using deception against common usage and against the pious tradition of the Scriptures." In short, Basil's quarrel with Eunomius in this area is a matter of the latter's refusal to honor scriptural-traditional terminology and of his proclivity to innovate instead. Basil points out in Book I (213Cff.) that according to Eunomius the common faith needs something to be added to it as if to make it more accurate. Indeed, Basil delivers sharp rebuke to the heretic for even using the expression, "the plain and common faith of all," for the impious manner in which he employs it involves him in patent contradiction. "Tell me," says Basil, "are the devout tradition of the Fathers, and the canon (as you yourself call it), and the standard, and the safe criterion--are these now to be called an organ of deceit and an art of contrivance and such names once again?" A rule or standard does not need anything to complete it: according to definition any addition would imply a deficiency. By such talk Eunomius betrays his total ignorance. By his disdain for the common faith, the deposit of <u>paradosis</u> which the Spirit has handed down through the Scriptures and the saints, he shows his spiritual depravity.

Chapter VI

BASIL AS EXEGETE

Basil's Exegetical Consciousness. Basil the Great occupies a position in the history of exegesis that is far from commonplace. Here as elsewhere he was a leader rather than a follower, and his independence of judgment and intellectual vigor nowhere reveal themselves to better advantage. In terms of sound principles and scientific data the exegetical material already at hand as a result of the activity of the Alexandrian school was not large or impressive. Although Origen must be reckoned among the first to venture in the direction of a scholarly approach to Scripture, this was largely offset by his radical resort to allegory, so that the solid exegetical content of his work is relatively small. It was rather the Antiochian school which brought exegesis within the orbit of a scientific grammatical-historical method. And in many ways Basil enjoys the distinction of being a forerunner of this school, a morning star of the exegetical Reformation which its work constitutes. H. Weiss expresses this thought in the statement that "the gap existing between the Alexandrians and the Antiochians is bridged ... by the three Cappadocians in such a manner that Gregory of Nyssa joins hands with the former, Basil with the latter, and Gregory of Nazianzus occupies a middle ground."[1] The immediacy

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[1] H. Weiss, op. cit., p. 50. The treatment in the first half of the present chapter is especially indebted to Weiss' two sections on "Lexical, Grammatical, Logical, and Rhetorical Considerations in the Biblical Text" and "The Sense of Scripture," pp. 50-79.

of Basil's relation to and influence upon the Antiochian school is personified in the renowned Diodore, bishop of Tarsus. The two were very likely fellow-students at Athens and remained close friends throughout life.[1] It was Diodore who in the fourth century was the moving spirit behind the rational school of interpretation, of which his disciples, Chrysostom, Theodore of Mopsuestia, and the latter's disciple, Theodoret, became such distinguished representatives. Although his chief distinction is undoubtedly his pupils Chrysostom and Theodore (the latter of whom became his successor), Diodore is said to have written a treatise on principles of interpretation, the first work of its kind by a Christian scholar.[2] Basil's influence upon Theodore and especially upon Chrysostom was also direct. Chrysostom to be sure was an intimate of Basil, the latter having induced in the Golden-mouthed an ascetic "conversion" similar to his own, while Basil's friendship with Theodore can hardly be questioned in the face of the fact that when Chrysostom had been reclaimed by Basil, John in turn won Theodore and another friend, and forsaking the rhetor Libanius, the three repaired to the monastic school of Diodore, to which Basil was already attached.

Basil's exegetical spirit is caught by Puech in a reference to the fair- and open-minded attitude exemplified in the Hexaemeron: "As a general rule [Basil] makes it a law not to dissimulate the obscurities which [the text of Genesis] presents; he grapples frankly with the problems it raises, and, whatever may be the value of the explanations offered, he at

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[1] Cf. Eps. XCIX:3, CXXXV, CLX, and CCXLIV:3.

[2] According to G. H. Gilbert (Interp. of the Bible, p. 134, n. 3), the title in Suidas is, ὁτὶς διαφρὰ [sic for τίς διαφορὰ?] ἱστορίας καὶ ἀλληγορίας. Vide F. H. Chase, Chrysostom, A Study in the History of Biblical Interpretation, pp. 10f. Generally the title of the lost treatise is given with θεωρίας in place of ἱστορίας (cf. e.g. Farrar, op. cit., pp. 23 n. 5, 213).

least has the merit of believing that it is necessary to furnish them."[1] Basil's approach to the exegesis of Scripture is basically a practical, common-sense one. He has a wholesome and positive respect for the natural meaning of words without their being tortured or twisted.[2] Over and over he inveighs against forced interpretations of Scripture. If he uses duress at all it is in the direction of extracting a practical application rather than of indulging exegetical fancy. It is interesting that while Origen's concept of inspiration led him to such an ethereal treatment of Scripture that its primary meaning was all but dissipated, Basil's method of exegesis was at basis simply a more responsible corollary of the same general theory of inspiration. Basil too saw that all Scripture is God-inspired and that there is not an idle syllable in it, but he also saw in this an indication of divine approval and purpose in the primary meaning, not a challenge to disregard it. His is after all the theory that leads to the greatest enhancement of the smallest syllable, for when we seek to ignore the primary signification of words we are on the way toward making the truth of God into a lie, even if a pious one. It is the merit of Basil's exegetical consciousness that he saw or at least sensed this. Instead of allowing him to become lost in excessive allegorical or mystical or figurative exposition, his insight led him to a lexical and grammatical regard for Scripture and to an appreciation of its formal and stylistic side as aids to interpretation. Thus he notes that sometimes in the Bible a first action is

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[1] Puech, op. cit., III, 256.

[2] Cf. e.g. his short word-study of orgē and thumos in Hom. in Ps. XXIX:4/127CD.

called an antapodosis instead of simply a dosis (cf. Ps. 118:17[1]), and offers a rationale which exhibits thoughtful and penetrating insight.[2] In Ps. 33:5 the Psalmist says exezētēsa instead of ezētēsa: the former is more emphatic and significant in the sense that a scrutiny (exereunēsis) involves more than an investigation (ereuna).[3] Nor does Basil disdain to forsake the rarified atmosphere of allegory or mysticism to grapple with mundane matters of grammar. One of his chief concerns in this area is the verb tense, which often appears to him highly significant. He notes that the first Psalm reads hos ouk eporeuthē and not hos ou poreuetai because the ascription of blessing can be risked with assurance only after this life.[4] Among the three Cappadocians Basil was keenest in his appreciation of the rhetorical qualities of the Bible--its mode of expression, figures of speech, and the like. Evidently with the anthropomorphists of his day in mind he often takes pains to enlighten for his readers passages which might be misused to support perverted views. When the Psalmist says that "He inclined his ear to me" (116:2), it should not produce in us a sensual conception of God: the writer so speaks in order to show forth his own weakness.[5] Likewise "the face of God" is not corporeal.[6] We should beware of applying human terminology to God by artifice or by force,[7] knowing that

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[1] This and all succeeding references to the Psalms in the present chapter are given according to the LXX.

[2] Hom. in Ps. VII:3/99E-100B.

[3] Hom. in Ps. XXXIII:3/146BC.

[4] Hom. in Ps. I:3/92Ef.

[5] Hom. in Ps. CXIV:2/200BC.

[6] Hom. in Ps. XXXIII:11/154CD.

[7] Adv. Eun. II:23/258E-259A.

all such mentions in Scripture are made anthrōpopathōs.[1] Other evidences of the rhetorical and esthetic appreciation of the Scriptures in Basil are abundant. Thus Genesis calls the whole day-and-night span of twenty-four hours "day" because the meaning of the whole may properly be taken from its more excellent part.[2] A similar pars pro toto obtains in the case of the makarios anēr of Ps. 1:1. Here "the prophet" does not mention woman because, male and female having the same nature (Gen. 1:27), it is sufficient to denominate the whole by its more important component.[3] On much the same principle Basil observes that it is the custom of Scripture to name the worst people after their sin rather than after their fathers, and to call the better sons by their characteristic virtue;[4] a like emphasis is made in R. brev. CCLXVIII/508Aff. Other formal features of the Word such as hyperbole and metonymy are not wasted on Basil; as an example of the latter H. Weiss mentions Hom. in Ps. XXIX:4/127B. Verse 4 of the same Psalm exhibits the familiar Hebrew literary device of antithetical parallelism; although Basil does not recognize the usage under this category, he comments that the order of the two statements is not accidental, it being the habit of the Bible to mention first unpleasant conditions or circumstances and after that the heartening ones in order to heighten the enjoyment of the latter.[5] Thus he describes as "wise and artistic" the manner in which Ps. 1 presents

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[1] Hom. in Ps. XXIX:2/125BC; cf. Adv. Eun. II:24/260D, "If a word is taken over from human affairs, choose its sound meaning, not its base one."

[2] Hex. II:8/20CD.

[3] Hom. in Ps. I:3/92DE.

[4] Hom. in Ps. VII:1/98C.

[5] Hom. in Ps. XXIX:4/127E.

virtue first from a negative and then from a positive point of view.[1] He also sees in the three components of the first verse of this Ps. an ascending order which answers to both the purpose of the writer and the nature of the conditions portrayed.[2] Especially since these homilies were written in a popular style and from a practical standpoint expressly for the people, the exercise of such interpretative insights and scholarly concerns testifies to a lively and responsible exegetical consciousness on the part of their author.

Text, Context, and Historical Setting. Basil is no less alive to concerns of a logical and contextual nature. Although as a rule he cites the Bible in proof-text fashion, he does not conceive of it merely as a congeries of disjointed passages. Words and phrases, sentences and parts of sentences are examined for their bearing on each other, and in the case of extended speeches and sections he probes the inner relationships of thought and meaning in order to extract the true thread of the argument. "If you attend part by part to what is said in the Psalms," he remarks, "you will learn the hidden meaning of the words."[3] He refers Ps. 44:2 ("My heart is pouring out a good word") not to God as do some but simply to the prophet because the words which immediately follow cannot be said of God without straining them.[4] Such appeals to context are quite frequent, if not always well taken. Sometimes this is by direct mention, as in R. brev. CCLXI/504BC, where Basil points out to his monks that "the meaning of 'if

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[1] Hom. in Ps. I:3-4/esp. 93 C.

[2] Ibid., 93Ef.

[3] Hom. in Ps. XLV:1/170C.

[4] Hom. in Ps. XLIV:3/160E-161A.

two of you shall agree' is made plain by the context." Originally the Matthean verse involved (18:19) was possibly an isolated pericope which was strung together with two others (18:15-18 and 18:20) around the numerical theme common to all three passages (and indeed the rest of the chapter). As the section stands Basil is perfectly justified in pointing out that the context "is discussing the man who rebukes the sinner and the man who is rebuked." Hence his interpretation: if these two--the sinner and his rebuker--agree on the remission of the former's sin, "it shall be given them by the merciful God." Basil does not trouble himself about the broader meaning of the words, "as touching anything that they shall ask;" his slighting of this in the interest of a concrete moral-practical application dictated by the circumstances is characteristic. A little later, in answer to a twofold question of the monks concerning scriptural mention of salt, Basil declares that "here also the sense is plain from the context" of each passage; he then dispenses advice which while eminently spiritual is pre-eminently practical.[1] Again when asked, "What is the inner chamber which the Lord commands him who prays to enter,"[2] he replies that "the force of the commandment is made plain by the argument; for the passage is addressed to those who are suffering from the vice of men-pleasing."[3] In R. brev. CI/451A-C Basil has already dealt with a more ticklish matter, the question of how the monastic administrator is to fulfill the command in Matt. 5:42 to "give to everyone that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of

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[1] R. brev. CCLXVI/506CD.

[2] Matt. 6:6.

[3] R. brev. CCLXXVII/513A.

thee turn not away." This command, Basil responds, "is as it were a kind of testing, as the context shows." That is, discrimination among the deserving and the undeserving who seek alms--the exercise of Godly common sense--is called for.[1] While the commands, "Sell what thou hast and give to the poor," and its parallel, "Sell what thou hast and give alms," are to be categorically obeyed, the one before us is to be applied in the case of wicked men "not as an absolute order but according to circumstances." Basil is wise enough to realize that it is best not to lay down a rule of thumb even if it were possible: "in view of the Lord's words ... why cannot a man come to a right decision for himself?" Here again Basil's feet are on the ground at the same time that his head is in the heavens: no mere allegorizing, no mere casuistry, but concrete, vital application. The down-to-earth manner in which he strives to relate Scripture to the practical, immediate situation seems to answer to a very sound intuition on his part that in its origin also Scripture was characterized by its relevance to men's actual needs in their daily circumstances. The statement with which he opens the homily De gratiarum actione (misc. hom. IV) is instinct with the modern awareness of the importance of the "Sitz im Leben" as an exegetical factor. Referring to "the words of the apostle through which he talks with the Thessalonians," Basil remarks that while written for our benefit, "[Paul's] teaching was always to those who happened to be present on such occasions." It is therefore certainly in the true apostolic tradition and spirit that Basil endeavors to make the benefit of those words availing to those whom he addresses. Another instance of his endeavor to relate Scripture to its historical milieu characterizes his approach to Ps. LIX. The history of the Ps., he explains, is not to be found verbatim any-

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[1] Cf. Morison, St. Basil and His Rule, p. 126.

where among the God-inspired accounts in terms which square with the superscription (vide Benedictine note f, Vol. I, p. 188). But what is equivalent will be found in the second book of the Kings (= II Sam. 8) by those who search diligently. On the basis of this association the only difficulty arises from the prospect that such a dismal psalm was written when David was at the pinnacle of his splendor and success. How could David, who must have been in the best of spirits, begin his poem with lament and mourning? Basil's answer is that the Psalmist is not necessarily referring to his triumphs; he is looking into the future that shall come at the consummation of the ages and is writing about the things that shall be changed.

Basil's Exegesis Primarily Literal-Practical. We may well pause to lay stress upon a just-mentioned characteristic as a pronounced feature of Basil's exegesis--the practical nature of his concern with the Bible. It should be noted at the same time that the word "exegesis" as used here does not have so much the modern meaning of a scientific criticism of the text as that of a religious commentary. This is not to say that Basil is never occupied with technical or scholarly questions as such: we have seen that he is fully conscious of their existence and importance. The theoretical facet of his interest is well instanced by Puech with relation to the Homilies on the Psalms. After pointing out that in these homilies Basil gives a slightly more important place to historical and philological interpretation than in the Hexaemeron, Puech continues:

> He essays to take account of the titles which the various Psalms bear in the edition of the Septuagint and to establish to what particular situation they correspond by making appeal to the historical books of the Bible (II Kings [Hom. in Ps. LIX:2], etc.); he compares the variants (Hom. in Ps. XXVIII:1) or the versions (Hom. in Ps. XLIV:4); he enters into explanations of grammar or of style; he seeks to determine the nature of the poetic and musical genre which the Psalms represent, and in what they differ from the

canticle, ᾠδή (ibid., 2).[1]

But such concerns are secondary to Basil. For him the technical matters of pure exegesis are not an end in themselves. Basil's primary concern is the spiritual life of his monks, of his congregation, of his correspondents--of whomsoever he confronts. It is not trite to say of him that he is interested in persons, not subjects or problems. Thus in perhaps the most notable and distinctive of his works, the Hexaemeron, the moral-practical motive prevails to the domination (if not the exclusion) of the scholarly, the theoretical, the technical, nor are the excellent lessons of popular philosophy which he delights to convey ever developed merely for their own sakes, much less for rhetorical or vain display. It is equally significant that in these same homilies the literal sense is stressed more than in all his other writings.[2] We shall not be far wide of the mark if we state that taking Basil's works as a whole the moral-practical interest and the literalistic approach are the outstanding features of his biblical method. It is only by a conscious effort that the modern student can fully appreciate the seriousness with which Basil takes the Mosaic cosmogony. Indeed, the whole of Scripture is accepted unquestioningly and at face value. The inspired record is patent truth itself. It does not raise problems for Basil, it answers them. The many passages throughout the sacred writings which we accept in a meaning accommodated or rationalized Basil took literally and made a superhuman effort to carry out. The sobriety and independence in his expository technique are factors especially deserving of recog-

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[1] Puech, op. cit., III, 262.

[2] H. Weiss, op. cit., p. 94.

nition in the face of the dominant allegorizing and mysticizing tendencies of the day. His influence was undoubtedly one of the decisive forces in stemming the tide of fanciful interpretation emanating from Alexandria and in restoring the balance and soundness associated with Antioch. It is true that the exegesis of the latter school was somewhat more literal than historical-grammatical,[1] but objectively it was a vast improvement over the prevailing Alexandrian mode. And according as the Fathers of the early centuries incline to one or the other of these traditions they are either still consulted for the sound and constructive aspects of their exegesis or are considered "a dead treasury of ingenuity and cleverness" which is "a noli me tangere for prudent interpreters."[2]

Alexandria vs. Antioch. The Alexandrian method derived from the conviction of the primitive church that there were passages in the OT which in addition to their obvious literal sense contained a deeper hidden meaning, a so-called mystical or mysterious sense. The roots of this persuasion are to be found in the Bible or rather in the NT itself, which on several occasions points out these overtones of meaning in the OT (cf. Matt. 2:15, Gal. 4:24) or unfolds them from its own pages (Jn. 12:16, Rom. 4:23). Following the precedent set by the apostles, the Fathers were soon engaged to outdo their exemplars. This zeal was a direct consequence of their profound belief in the inspiration of Scripture--a conviction which soon expanded into the equal certainty of a mysterious meaning hidden under the veil of every letter. Certainly nothing in the Bible could be trivial or incoherent, and

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[1] Robert M. Grant, The Bible in the Church: A Short History of Interpretation (New York: Macmillan Co., 1948), pp. 195f.

[2] H. Weiss, op. cit., p. 59.

whenever such appeared to be the case it was only a cloak for deeper truth and a challenge to the interpreter's ingenuity. The search for secondary and tertiary meanings was favored by strong external factors as well. One was the hybrid Platonic-Judaistic theosophy of Philo, which conceived of the OT as essentially no more than a worthless shadowy outline of a higher spiritual world. Another was the mystical method of interpretation characteristic of the dominant Neo-Platonism, a philosophical strain which was seemingly related to Christianity and could therefore easily insinuate itself. Further factors were the advent of a crude millenialism in the third century and the appearance of anthropomorphism, in combating both of which allegorization was a handy and flexible weapon. Finally, two pronounced peculiarities of early Christianity added their influence--its eminently practical character and the "arcana disciplina."[1] The practical nature of early discipleship strongly favored an exegetical mode which would subserve the personal religious life; for such a purpose the allegorical-mystical method, which unfolded a treasure of spirituality behind even the most insignificant words, was far superior to the colorless sobriety of the grammatical-historical. The allegorical-mystical mode was equally made to order for the practice of the "secret discipline": the more inscrutably and ambiguously scriptural passages were presented, the less opportunity was afforded profane enemies to use them against the church. Abetted by these factors and wearing the halo of science conferred by the Alexandrian school, the allegorical method reached its zenith in the third and fourth centuries and indeed during the fourth passed beyond it into the area of

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[1] Vide supra, p. 142, n. 2.

decline and deterioration. Whereas the first efforts of the primitive Christians and early Fathers centered in passages and procedures which the hagiographs themselves had indicated, discretion was gradually so far abandoned that the literal sense came to be ignored as inconsequential and was even declared to be inadmissible and dangerous. In place of single words which could not be eradicated mystical-allegorical meanings were substituted on an entirely arbitrary basis. Referring to the allegorizing explanation of the multiplying of the bread in Matt. 14:16ff. by the great representative of the Alexandrian method, Origen, a commentator quoted by H. Weiss puts the situation well. "No matter how ingenious such explanations may be, they affect the reader with a feeling of dismal oppression, as if the ground under his feet were giving way. They play with history and thereby unconsciously take the first step toward making history itself a play of phantasy, an allegory, a myth."[1]

Alongside this radical exegesis but sharply distinguished from it another philosophy of interpretation had been growing since the second century. This was the so-called historical-grammatical method, according to which the highest task of the interpreter was to immerse himself in the mind and milieu of the author in order to think his thoughts after him, as it were. As we have noted, the influence of this trend emanated from Antioch and revolved around several distinguished sons of that ancient Christian center--Diodore and his disciples Theodore of Mopsuestia, Chrysostom, and Theodoret, although Lucian of Samosata and Dorotheus the presbyter in their earlier headship of the theological school of Antioch seem to have

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[1] H. Weiss, op. cit., pp. 62f., quoting Schegg, Comm. zu Matth., ad loc., Bd. 2, S. 271.

given rather decisive form and direction to the literalistic mode of hermeneutics which it espoused. According to this view the literal sense is everywhere to be recognized as primary and the one to be developed first. In addition a second, more obscure meaning may exist, but the mystical sense is limited to the OT and is to be found only when clearly indicated by the Bible itself; in any case this secondary approach is a method to be used with the utmost discretion. Such was essentially the technique of interpretation constituting the practical alternative in point of claim to Basil's allegiance. On the face of it several factors would seem to have conspired to predispose him toward the Alexandrian method. Had he not been trained since childhood in the Origenistic tradition as transmitted through Origen's own disciple, Gregory the Wonder-worker? Had he not imbibed Neoplatonic philosophy and the allegorical spirit freely in his years of intensive discipline in Greek culture? Had he not sojourned in Alexandria itself during his ascetic tour, hungry for spiritual and scriptural enlightenment? Had he not confirmed his enthusiastic admiration for Origen by devoting his marginal time and energies in the first flush of ascetic renunciation to helping edit an anthology of the master's works? And would not the Alexandrian hermeneutic have special attraction for him because of its adaptability in edifying the believer? Several opposing factors however remain to be weighed. In the first place, the arbitrariness of the allegorical mode was the object of far wider attack than by the Antiochians. Already in the second and third centuries it had furnished the heathen critics Celsus and Porphyry with much ammunition, Origen being the favorite target of the latter. So shaky had its position become by Basil's day that a writing exegete simply could not be at ease with it. Again, the Arians, the chief

adversaries of the Cappadocians, had had their training mainly in the Antiochian tradition and made their scruple for the letter of the Bible one of their boasts. Striving against them Basil could not barricade himself behind the flimsy fabric of allegorical interpretation. Finally, Basil's self-reliance, independence of judgment, and power of discrimination had long since been confirmed during his educational career. It would have been psychologically impossible for the youth who had withstood the allure of Athenian science to have uncritically accepted a method of interpretation the shortcomings of which were by then recognized even on the part of the Alexandrians.

Basil's Disavowal of Allegory. Basil faces the issue posed by the prevalence of allegory with forthrightness and with obvious effort to arrive at a principle. Several times he declares himself with a directness which indicates that he must often have confronted the havoc wrought by the "mysterious" sense. When it comes to the license characteristic of the method, especially in the hands of its irresponsible proponents, he is even vehement. Nor is Basil the man to dissimulate his convictions as a scholar when facing his flock as a homilist. Of such a quality is his discussion in Homily IX:1/80B-81A on the Hexaemeron, a passage in which the note of finality seems to stamp it as representing his ultimate thought in the matter.

> I know the laws of allegory, though less through my own efforts than through those of others. There are those indeed who do not admit the common meaning of the Scriptures, for whom water is not water but something else, who explain a plant, a fish, as it suits their fancy, who change the origin of reptiles and of wild beasts to suit their allegories, like the interpreters of dreams in sleep to make them serve their own ends. For me grass is grass; plant, fish, wild beast, domestic animal--I take all in the literal sense. "For I am not ashamed of the gospel." ... It is this [edificatory economy of Scripture] which those seem to me not to have understood who by

devious phrases and figurative explanations [paragōgais ... kai tropologiais] have undertaken to give a seemingly higher dignity of their own invention to Scripture. But this is to believe themselves wiser than the Holy Spirit, and to insinuate their own ideas under the pretence of interpretation. Let Scripture be understood as it has been written [Noeisthō toinun hōs gegraptai].

Basil's affirmation that he accepts everything in a literal sense is an undoubted reference to Origen, and Fialon thinks that it may have been evoked by some criticism of the third homily on the Hexaemeron meanwhile. This might well be. Jackson points out that to hearers familiar with Origenistic interpretation it was an innovation to adopt such a radically literal mode of exposition as Basil does here.[1] In any case it is this common sense literalistic approach which is his most distinguishing exegetical characteristic and which gives him so significant a place as a precursor of the Antiochian school. Elsewhere in the Hex. Basil again declares his aversion to the allegorical method in a passage as pungent as that quoted above. Here too the reference to Origen is unmistakable.

Concerning the separation of the waters I am obliged to contest the opinion of certain writers in the church who, under the pretence of sublime conceptions and a mysterious higher sense [prophasei anagōgēs kai noēmatōn hupsēloterōn], have taken refuge in allegories and who say that by the word "waters" are designated figuratively [tropikōs] spiritual and incorporeal powers. ... Let us reject such theories as dreams and old women's tales. Let us understand that by water, water is meant; and for the dividing of the waters by the firmament let us accept the reason which has been given us.[2]

Basil goes on to confer upon one of the allegorical fancies he mentions the dubious compliment that "we admire the theory as ingenious without being able to acknowledge the truth of it."

Earlier in the Lenten week which gave us the Hexaemeron Basil had in-

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[1] B. Jackson, NpNF, VIII, xlv.

[2] Hex. III:9/31BC.

veighed against those who do not explain the words of Scripture "as is natural" (hōs pephuken).[1] He is referring to Gen. 1:2b, "... Darkness was upon the face of the deep." "A new source for fables and most impious imaginations," he exclaims, "if one distorts the sense of these words at the will of one's fancies. By 'darkness' such people do not understand hōs pephuken ... a place for some reason deprived of light. For them 'darkness' is an evil power, or rather evil itself, having its origin in itself in opposition and resistance to the goodness of God." After expatiating on the false notion of evil to which this leads, Basil disposes of the matter with the statement: "Let us then be silent for the moment about these metaphors and allegories, and simply following without vain curiosity the words of Holy Scripture let us take from darkness the idea which it gives us."[2] The same disciplined and restrained mode of literal interpretation is notable in the homily Contra Sabellianos etc. (misc. hom. XXIV). The healthy sense of the circumspect exhibited in Basil's hermeneutics was nurtured by the Bible itself, "for I am taught by Scripture," he tells us in another connection, "not to allow my imagination to wander too far afield."[3] Nowhere in his writings do we meet with a disavowal of the literal sense, as we do with the Alexandrians.

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[1] Hex. II:4/15C.

[2] Ibid., 5/17AB.

[3] Hex. III:4/26BC. In this same connection there is interest in Hex. VI:5/54A, where, referring to those who seek justification in Scripture for astrological forecasts of birth, Basil describes them by the proverbial phrase, hoi huper ta eskammena pēdōntes, "those who overstep the bounds." Cf. also Adv. Eun. II:14/249B, where after quoting Jn. 1:1 he states that "by these two expressions [Jn. 1:1a and Jn. 1:1bc] the matter is fenced in: we cannot transcend the one, nor can we escape the other."

Basil a Proto-Antiochian. But while Basil is genuinely exercised to establish the literal sense, and while he contested more strongly than any of his contemporaries against the excesses of the allegorical method, he could not liberate himself from it completely. The physician did not entirely heal himself. Whenever it was a choice of barren exegetical principle or of fruitful practical application, Basil was constitutionally prone to yield the former or at least to concentrate on the latter. The urgencies of everyday reality laid inescapable constraint upon him. Generally his method is first to ascertain the literal sense in its grammatical and/or historical reference, and then, if a higher sense is developed at all, to base it upon this.[1] But Basil's employment of the so-called higher sense is comparatively very limited and very prudent. And when he does indulge explanations of his own it is with a certain noticeable reticence--a reserve sometimes so marked as to furnish plain indication that while valuable in his eyes, his own expositions are in the nature of obiter dicta and are if need be a dispensable addition.[2] Basil's consciousness at this point seems to parallel Paul's realization of the distinction between the teaching he had received by revelation and the pronouncements he made "not of the Lord." In the quest for a "higher" sense Basil often seeks guidance from other Scriptures which use the words to be explained in a figurative and deeper manner.[3] Again, he limits the mysterious sense strictly to the OT. Even so he indulges the deeper meaning much oftener than he should

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[1] Hom. in Ps. XXVIII:3/118BC, XXXII:6/138C-E, XLV:4/173BC.

[2] H. Weiss (op. cit., p. 68, n. 4) refers us to Hom. in Ps. XXXII:6/138B.

[3] Hom. in Ps. XXVIII:1/114.

have according to his own basic principle of exegesis. Midway of a eulogistic catalogue of Basil's writings by Gregory of Nazianzus in which he mentions separately his friend's Hexaemeron, his polemical works, his writings on the Spirit, his panegyrics, and his moral and practical discourses, the Nazianzan states that Basil's "other exegetical works, in which he gives explanations for those who are shortsighted by a threefold [or clear[1]] inscription on the solid tablets of his heart, lead me on from a mere literal or symbolical interpretation to a still wider view ... until I attain the highest pinnacle."[2] It is certainly in his homilies on the Psalms, to which Gregory evidently refers, that Basil's propensity to overextend his exegesis is strongest. Here the parity between sober interpretation and vital application blurs. Rather, attention is concentrated so intensively on the latter that the former slips from focus. In his anxiety to possess his readers of the all-important counsels of Christian faith and conduct, Basil ofttimes gathers instruction from the sacred text in such a manner that his expositions tend to become not so much moral applications as original teachings by the sacred writers themselves. Jackson feels that the threefold method of interpretation alluded to by Gregory "may be understood to be the literal, moral, and allegorical"[3] (a thought probably suggested by the P.G. n. 45, ad loc.). As a matter of fact the terminology of Basil, in common with that of all the other contemporary fathers, was somewhat loose and confused. Besides the real or precise literal meaning there

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[1] Vide P.G., n. 45, ad loc.

[2] Greg. Naz., Orat. XLIII:67/P.G.XXXVI:585A-C.

[3] B. Jackson, NpNF, VIII, xlv.

existed not only the mystical or hidden sense but also the figurative, and it seems that the latter two were not always strictly distinguished.[1] Jackson points out that the Hom. in Ps. XXVIII furnishes an instance of both literal and allegorical interpretation.

The LXX. Title is Ψαλμὸς τῷ Δαυὶδ ἐξοδίου σκηνῆς, "Psalmus David in exitu e tabernaculo." Primarily this is a charge delivered to the priests and Levites on leaving their sacred offices. They are to remember all that it is their duty to prepare for the holy service. As they go out of the Tabernacle the psalm tells them all that it behoves them to have in readiness for the morrow, young rams (Ps. xxix. 1, LXX.), glory and honour, glory for His name. "But to our minds, as they contemplate high and lofty things, and by the aid of an interpretation dignified and worthy of Holy Scripture make the Law our own, the meaning is different. There is no question of ram in flock, nor tabernacle fashioned of lifeless material, nor departure from the temple. The tabernacle for us is this body of ours, as the Apostle has told us in the words, 'For we that are in this tabernacle do groan.' [...] The departure from the temple is our quitting this life. For this these words bid us be prepared, bringing such and such things to the Lord, if the deeds done here are to be a means to help us on our journey to the life to come."[2]

Similarly, with special reference to the familiar parable in Jn. 15:1-8, Basil develops the biblical figure of the vine in rather extensive allegorical detail.[3] Again, inveighing against those who grieve the Spirit, he applies to them Matt. 24:51, which says that the Lord shall cut asunder the malingering servant in the parable--"the cutting asunder," Basil adds, "meaning complete separation from the Spirit."[4] In such manner do we find our exegete applying allegory to longer passages or to a single detail,

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[1] H. Weiss (op. cit., pp. 70f.) proceeds to develop a long illustration from the unfortunately suspect Commentary on the Prophet Isaiah.

[2] B. Jackson, NpNF, p. xlv; Hom. in Ps. XXVIII:1/114B quoted. Jackson also cites what he calls "an elaborate allegorisation of the 'times and the seasons' of Acts i. 7" in the non-Basilian Ep. VIII.

[3] Hex. V:6/45D-46C.

[4] De Spir. S. XVI:40/34D.

Amand's rather sweeping statement to the contrary notwithstanding that "Basil himself never uses allegorical interpretation...."[1] The tendency to perceive veiled or hidden collateral meanings is a characteristic spiritual-literary attitude of the times which is reflected in other remarks of Basil: thus his declaration that "everywhere in mystic language history is sown with the dogmas of theology."[2] On the whole however there is comparatively little allegory in Basil. He saw that to give Scripture a genuinely spiritual application in practical or edificatory terms, which was his aim, he did not have to give it facticious meaning in the mysterious sense. Generally he finds in the common sense literal-historical interpretation illuminated by the Spirit the true religious meaning of the Bible. Modern scholarship would agree that this is as it should be. It is this quality which makes his exegetical approach something of a landmark in the history of interpretation. The fact that he wavered in its application does not detract from this statement or compromise his advanced position with respect to the times. Far from being above reproach in the matter of consistency, the Antiochians themselves are said to quote some of the less substantial mystical explanations of Basil as models.[3] As for the other members of the Cappadocian triumvirate, neither shares the preferred position of Basil in his disdain for the allegorical method. Gregory of Nazianzus, to use his own words, occupies a "middle ground between those who are thick-headed [i.e., literalists] and those who love the spiritual and anagogical inter-

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[1] Rev. d'hist. ecclés., XLVII (1952), 223.

[2] Hex. VI:2/51B; cf. IX:6/87D.

[3] H. Weiss (op. cit., p. 69, n. 2) refers us to Theodoret, Dial. I, P.G. LXXXIII:93BC, but a reading of the passage reveals little or no mysticism in it.

pretation too much"; both positions are equally reprehensible.[1] Actually Gregory is quite bold in his use of the allegorical or mystical sense, sometimes combining it with the historical in a striking manner.[2] Basil's brother Gregory is still closer to the Alexandrian school, though he was not insensible to the importance of the literal meaning.[3] In his Hexaemeron he seeks to interpret the text "keeping each word in its own meaning";[4] for example he sides with Basil in denying that the "darkness" of Gen. 1:2b refers to the prince of darkness.[5] But this is the exception; by his own statement he is committed to proving that those are wrong who say that we must confine ourselves to the literal sense and shun the help of enigmas and allegories.[6] Where moral turpitude is portrayed in the Bible the literal sense may indeed do harm. In his allegorizing the Nyssenian employs much ingenuity and extends the method even to the NT. So great is his concern for the so-called moral sense that in contrast to Basil he seems almost to be ashamed of the biblical text. On the whole H. Weiss appears to be justified in his conclusion that among all the Oriental Fathers of the third and fourth centuries Basil stands nearest to the Antiochians.[7]

Basil's Literalism Often Virtue Carried to a Fault. A few examples

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[1] Greg. Naz., Orat. XLV:12/P.G.XXXVI:637C.

[2] Greg. Naz., Orat. XXXVIII:12/P.G.XXXVI:324BC.

[3] Greg. Nys., De beatitud., Orat. VII/P.G.XLIV:1284B: "Let us not plunge too deeply into speculation; even the obvious meaning is sufficient in itself and helpful in acquiring goodness."

[4] Greg. Nys., Hex., P.G. XLIV:68D.

[5] Supra, p. 173.

[6] Greg. Nys., In canticum cant., P.G. XLIV:756B.

[7] H. Weiss, op. cit., p. 71.

of Basil's literalism may be given to illustrate its shortcomings. We have seen that it can be beneficent, but sometimes it is not. Adv. Eun. III:3/275A is an instance of how Basil makes a theological construction out of a single word. "In that the Lord said, 'I shall ask the Father and he will give you another Paraclete,'[1] the Lord himself is shown to be a Paraclete for us, so that the name Paraclete serves no little to prove the glory of the Holy Spirit." Here Basil fixes upon the word allon, arguing by means of it from the divinity of the Second Person to that of the Third.[2] This answers to Basil's emphasis that there is not an idle syllable in Holy Writ. He also applies exegetically his conviction that the silence of Scripture is significant. The latter standpoint characterizes his discussion in Adv. Eun. II:19/254D-255A, the conclusion of which is a locus classicus on the disputed reading of Eph. 1:1. After quoting Gal. 4:8, Jer. 5:7, and the apocryphal Est. 14:11, in the first two of which idols are referred to as not being gods, Basil states that the apostle "also calls non-existent [sic] the nations deprived of the knowledge of God, saying, 'God hath chosen the things that are not'" (I Cor. 1:28b). "For since God is both truth and life," he continues, "those not united according to the faith with the God who is ... are addressed as non-existent themselves." To clinch his argument Basil cites Eph. 1:1b in the form, "... To the saints who are, and the faithful in Christ Jesus," adding, "For thus both those before us have handed it down, and we have found it in the ancient

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[1] Jn. 14:16.

[2] It is very likely on the basis of this passage and exegesis that in the De Spir. S. XVIII:46/39A Basil describes the Son, the Paraclete, as sending the Spirit, the Paraclete. Cf. further Jackson, NpNF, p. 29a, n. 7. Chrysostom's comment on Jn. 14:16 (In Jo., ad loc.) is especially incisive: "'Another Paraclete,' that is, another such as I am. Thus two opposite heresies are demolished by one blow; 'another' shows the difference of Person, 'Paraclete,' the affinity of Essence."

copies."[1] Basil's argument that saints are those who truly have being and that idols and their worshipers are non-existent rests upon a rather curious juxtaposition of literal quotations. In the momentum of his discussion he confuses passages in which being is the issue with those in which it is deity. Thus in Gal. 4:8 it is not a question of gods that are not, but of gods "that are not such by nature." "That Paul conceived of the deities whom the Galatians formerly worshipped as real existences, is neither proved nor disproved by this sentence ...";[2] his concern is theological and not ontological. Such is also the case with Jer. 5:7. In I Cor. 1:28b, on the other hand, Paul uses a philosophical term for nonentities, ta mē onta, and the usage in Add. to Est. 14:11 is parallel. Although Basil concludes on the ontological note, he does not distinguish the two sets of quotations. Philosophical subtleties are readily sacrificed for apologetic and edificatory purposes.

Another instance of Basil's excessive literalism concerns the familiar "Let us make man" of Gen. 1:26a. As we should expect, in company with the Fathers generally[3] Basil sees in what is probably a pluralis majestatis a reference to the Second Person of the Trinity. Early in the Hex. he points out that the "speaking" of God in the creation account is simply the anthropomorphic equivalent of "the divine will and the first impetus of divine intelligence" which are the Word of God--that is, the Son vaguely represented. The "language" which God uses "is only a wise and ingenious contrivance to set our minds seeking the Person to whom the words are ad-

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[1] Only a little later Jerome seems to be unaware of any variation from the TR of today.

[2] E. De W. Burton, ICC, Galatians, p. 227.

[3] Cf. e.g. Theophilus of Antioch, Ad Autolycus II:18, and Athanasius, Contra gentes XLVI.

dressed." "By making God command and speak, the Scripture tacitly shows us [the Son]...."[1] In Hex. VI:2 Basil makes the same emphasis. "When once you have learned who spoke, think immediately of the hearer. God said, 'Let there be lights ... and God made two great lights.' Who spoke, and who made? Do you not see a double person?"[2] It is in concluding the Hex., however, that Basil gives fullest development to this theme.[3] "And God said, 'Let us make man': ... in these words the light of theology shines as through windows, and the Second Person shows himself in a mystical way without yet appearing fully." Basil specifically rejects the idea of a self-exhortation as well as the Jewish explanation that the Creator is addressing his celestial court.

We turn to a further example of Basil's literality. In the De Spir. S. XXVI:62/52Bff. he declares it to be "an extraordinary statement but ... nonetheless true that the Spirit is frequently spoken of as the place [chora] of them that are being sanctified." He proceeds to support his thesis by a wooden interpretation of several passages. A single illustration will suffice. "Now what is a spiritual burnt offering? 'The sacrifice of praise.' And in what place [topos] do we offer it? In the Holy Spirit. Where have we learned this? From the Lord himself in the words, 'The true worshipers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth.'" Amazingly, a little later Basil offers a second interpretation of the same passage to combat the idea that worship has anything to do with locale.

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[1] Hex. III:2/22Eff.

[2] Hex. VI:2/51B.

[3] Hex. IX:6/87B.

"Deceived as [the woman of Samaria] was by the customs of her country into the belief that worship was local, our Lord, with the object of giving her better instruction, said that worship ought to be offered 'in spirit and in truth,' plainly meaning by the truth, himself."[1]

Basil's literalism goes to seed in other ways. He is often prosaic when the Bible is poetic. Thus in Ep. CCLX the discussion of Gen. 4:15a^bc referred to elsewhere[2] is followed by an interpretation of Gen. 4:23b-24, which reads in the RSV:

> "I have slain a man for wounding me,
> a young man for striking me.
> If Cain is avenged sevenfold,
> truly Lamech seventy-sevenfold."

Basil conceives of the parallelism as a reference to two murders.[3] "There is a difference between wounding and hurt. And there is a difference between a man and a young man." The seventy-sevenfold punishment of Lamech is also interpreted in a rigid numerical sense. By his literalism Basil has already put a quantitative aspect upon the nature of forgiveness in discussing the significance of the figure "seven" earlier in the same letter. Referring to Peter's use of the number in his question as to forgiveness, Basil observes, "Our Lord did not vary the number but multiplied the seven, and so fixed the limit of the forgiveness." For Basil then our Lord's usage had the opposite of the result intended.[4] As for other examples of Basil's generally straightforward and indeed often ultra-literalistic treatment of Scripture, one need turn no further than the Rules--

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[1] De Spir. S. XXVI:64/53E.

[2] Supra, p. 97, n. 1.

[3] Basil also quite misses the parallelism in the bruised reed and smoking flax of Isa. 42:3 = Matt. 12:20: R. brev. CCXCI/517DE.

[4] But cf. R. brev. XV.

Moral, Longer, and Shorter. While some of his interpretations will surprise us, so will the fact that he was never at a loss to produce a scriptural reason for the hope that was in him. It is but rarely that any fault can be found concerning his familiarity with the Bible. We may question how a literalist of any sort who had read Acts 1:9-11 could state "that we must not expect the coming of the Lord to be local or physical, but must look for a coming in the glory of the Father through all the world at once."[1] Our wonder is increased when we note that Basil supports the statement with the quotation of Matt. 24:23-24 instead of vs. 27; nor is this to mention his citation of Mk. 13:26, which pictures the Son as "coming in clouds." It is unusual too that in R. brev. XXXVIII/427CD, which considers the case of "a brother who receives a command and refuses to obey but afterward changes his mind," no mention is made of Matt. 21:28-32, a parable in which Jesus deals specifically with such a situation.

The Hegemony of the Greek Version. Basil shared with the Fathers an important exegetical peculiarity in relation to the OT. This was the use of the LXX or some form of Greek translation instead of the Hebrew as the basic text. So universal was the domination of the Greek that it is perhaps not until Jerome that we come to the earliest of the Fathers to apply an extensive firsthand knowledge of Hebrew to exegetical problems.[2] The use of the LXX as the authoritative standard was of particular moment with relation to the controversial struggles of the early centuries. To be sure, the emergence of the LXX on a virtual par with the Hebrew text created a revolution. It injected into the development of exegesis and doctrine a

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[1] Mor. LXVIII:2/287AB.

[2] Vide C. J. Elliott, "Hebrew Learning among the Fathers," Smith and Wace's Dict. Chr. Biog., II, 851-72.

whole new set of data. The material was provided from which an infinite number of fresh meanings and nuances could be derived. Every new word was pregnant with meaning. In the hands of Christian controversialists each became a potential tool for shaping belief and doctrine. But each also proved to be a two-edged weapon. The heretic too could wield the new technique to cut down and to destroy.[1] In the long run however the difficulty contained the seeds of its own solution in that the divergences among the several Greek translations ultimately necessitated a return to the Hebrew. Origen made a start in this direction, and Jerome went the whole way. Meanwhile, Basil is hardly an exception to the rule that on the whole the Greek of the OT is employed with seemingly no consciousness that a translation and not the original is involved.[2] Whereas it is almost certain that Basil did not concede divine inspiration to the LXX, he nevertheless treats it *de facto* as if it were inspired. The pseudepigraphic tradition which upheld the inspiration of the LXX was undoubtedly a potent factor in the unquestioning manner of its acceptance, while the nature and force of other influences can be surmised from the way in which the Latin and English vulgates have often obscured the originals since. The bearing of all this upon the "great debate" at Nicea is many-sided; suffice it to say here that "there are a few quotations from the Old Testament which recur so constantly in the Arian discussions both before and after the Council that there can be no reasonable doubt that they were brought forward

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[1] Cf. O. Ring, "Das Basiliusproblem," *Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte*, LI (1932), 365-83.

[2] This is not to imply that as the "original" the reading of the Hebrew MT has unquestioned a priori superiority to the LXX in all cases.

there."[1]

(1) Prov. 8:22. Westcott, whom we have quoted, goes on to point out that "perhaps the most famous passage in the whole controversy is that taken from Proverbs viii. 22."[2] Speaking in the name of Wisdom the writer of the verse says:

יְהוָה קָנָנִי רֵאשִׁית דַּרְכּוֹ קֶדֶם מִפְעָלָיו מֵאָז׃

The crux of the passage is the verb, קָנָנִי. C. F. Burney has summarized the evidence carefully.[3] The basic sense of קנה is "get," "acquire" (thus BDB); the meaning "possess" or "own" also obtains, though never simply or per se, but along the line of the idea of possessing something which <u>has been acquired</u>. If we exclude Prov. 8:22, out of eighty-seven occurrences of the verb in the OT and the Heb. text of Ecclus., sixty may be classified under the shade of meaning "buy," one under "own" (Isa. 1:3), twenty-one under "acquire" (other than by purchase), one under "beget" and one under "get,"[4] and three under "create." In addition, an analysis of Hebrew proper names reveals that with respect to the last two categories ("beget"-"get" and "create") קנה was well known in popular usage. While the idea of possession without acquisition cannot be substantiated for a single occurrence of the verb (even Isa. 1:3 not excepted), the idea of creation is

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[1] B. F. Westcott, <u>The Two Empires</u> (London: Macmillan & Co., Ltd., 1909), p. 339. The subsequent pages in Westcott are drawn on herein.

[2] In an article on "Christ as the ΑΡΧΗ of Creation" (<u>JTS</u>, XXVII [1926], 160), C. F. Burney says that "the interpretation of Prov. viii 22 has raised greater controversy than that of almost any other passage in the O. T."

[3] Burney, <u>op. cit.</u>, esp. pp. 160-73.

[4] --The latter to explain the name קַיִן in Gen. 4:1, where according to Skinner (ICC, <u>Genesis</u>, p. 102) "all Vns. express the idea of 'acquiring.'"
Cf. the treatment of Prov. 8:22 in the spurious <u>Adv. Eun.</u> IV/293A-294B (trans. by Jackson, NpNF, pp. xlif.).

closely connected with the idea of acquisition as being one form of it. And since Wisdom certainly cannot be conceived as having been bought or acquired as though it were something originally external to God, we have to choose between the meanings "created" and "begat."[1] Further investigation leads Burney to choose "begat," and he renders the complete verse:

> The Lord begat me as the beginning of His way,
> The antecedent of His works, of old.

When we turn to the versions we find that the LXX renders קנה with a verb which conveys the shade of meaning "create":

Kurios ektisen me archēn hodōn autou eis erga autou.

(The Lord created me as the beginning of his paths toward his works.)

The heretics did not miss the opportunity thus afforded to apply the term ktisma ("creature") to the Son, and it is not surprising to find Basil energetically refuting it as one of the principal Arian weapons wielded by Eunomius. In a brief passage distinguished by a certain analytical insight and comprehensive sweep, Basil treats of his compatriot's blasphemy in calling the Lord a creature.

> I have many things to say about this word [ektisen]. First, it is thus used in all the Scriptures only this once [hapax]. Then, it occurs in a book containing a great deal that is hidden in meaning, one that is filled with proverbs and parables and dark sayings and puzzles, so that nothing indubitable or illuminating can be drawn from it. I omit further comment so as not to lengthen my treatise with longer digressions. ... Meanwhile I shall not pass by as unimportant the following point, that certain other interpreters who fathom the meaning of the Hebrew more aptly have rendered ektēsato me instead of ektisen. This will offer the greatest obstacle against the blasphemy of creaturely interpretation. For he who said, "I have acquired [ektēsamēn: Burney, "gotten"] a man through God," did not create Cain, but gave birth to him; and this word [ktizō] is the very one which he used.[2] [Basil's masculine here also reflects the LXX.]

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[1] Cf. Delitzsch's commentary on Proverbs, trans. by Easton, p. 184.

[2] Adv. Eun. II:20/256B-D. Cf. supra, p. 185, n. 4.
For a comprehensive treatment of Prov. 8:22-31 vide Alois Hudal, Die religiösen und sittlichen Ideen des Spruchbuches (Rom: Päpstl. Bibel-Institut, 1914), chap. 4, esp. pp. 106-121, where the usage of the Fathers is surveyed. Cf. B. Botte, "La sagesse dans les livres sapientiaux," Revue des sciences phil. et théol., XIX (1930), 83-94.

The "other interpreters" to whom Basil refers undoubtedly include Aquila, Symmachus, and Theodotion, all of whom use ektēsato. In this term, as in קָנָה, the idea of acquiring is inherent: Burney renders it "gat possession of me." Burney cites Basil's treatment of the matter as "perhaps the most acute comment on the meaning of the passage which is to be found in the Fathers."[1] To appreciate this one need only compare the rather probing and well-rounded analysis of Basil with that of Athanasius in the passage at issue. Athanasius of course was an older contemporary and friend of Basil and indeed the peer of the defenders of the faith in his day. "But," says Westcott, "he never (as far as I have noticed) even alludes to the uncertainty of the meaning of the original word, which he found represented by ἔκτισε; he never quotes the rendering of the other Greek interpreters; he never indicates the least perception of the necessity of seeking the true sense of the phrase by the examination of the usage of the principal term in other places."[2] Basil acquits himself quite well on practically all these scores.

(2) Ps. 7:7. The stirrings of an advanced exegetical consciousness are also evident in the course of Basil's treatment of Ps. 7:7.[3] The Hebrew at this point is generally held to yield:

> Arise, Yahweh, in thine anger,
> Lift up thyself against the ragings of mine adversaries:
> And awake for me; thou hast commanded judgment.

In the LXX the first line of the tristich is equivalent to the Hebrew. The

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[1] Burney, op. cit., p. 172.

[2] Westcott, op. cit., pp. 340 f.

[3] Hom. in Ps. VII:3/100D ff.

second line of the Greek reads, "Be lifted up in the boundaries of my enemies." But Basil reads into these lines as well. Following the fashion of his day, he wears his Christian spectacles constantly when perusing his OT, i. e., the Greek version. Instead of confronting the translation with the original to assess any variance between them, he fixes upon the verb-thought in the two lines. "The prophet is praying that the mystery of the resurrection may be already enacting itself unto the annulment of their sins." Or, he continues, this may mean the elevation (hupsōsis) on the cross, which was going to take place after the foes' wickedness had risen to its most extreme bound. Though Basil reads NT theology into his OT, the reserve with which he does so is reflected in his use of hupsōsis rather than of anastēsis. The third line of the tristich runs in the LXX: "Rouse thyself, O Lord my God, in the commandment which thou hast commanded." Here again Basil foregoes any effort to confirm the rendering which his translation gives or to seek the clue to its exegesis by reference to the original. The only difficulty of which he is aware is a dilemma of interpretation consisting of two different possibilities. The third line of the verse, he says, "may refer to the mystery of the resurrection because the prophet is asking the judge to arise in vengeance of all sins and in fulfillment of all the previously given commandments; but it may also refer to the condition of things at the prophet's time because the prophet is asking God to arise in vengeance of the commandment which he had given." Basil then mentions the Fifth Commandment with apparent relation to Absalom and the Cushi of II Sam. 18. Though confined to the Greek, the treatment thus turns out to be another instance of exegetical initiative and insight of a higher order on Basil's part. He first cites the current mystical explana-

tion, and thereupon proceeds along an independent line in the direction of a logical-historical interpretation. We can almost hear him saying: This verse may prophesy the resurrection, but let us also think of the circumstances in which it was written. Apart from the reference to the resurrection, in the first alternative Basil reveals as sound a grasp of the true thought as the original is likely to yield, while his effort to provide a "Sitz im Leben" in terms of a historical situation suggested by the heading of the Psalm is not unworthy of scholarship 1500 years later. In this respect Basil's interpretation may be said to be spiritually sensitive and notably enlightened.

(3) Ps. 44:2a. The opening words of Ps. 44 provide a further example of Basil's effort to throw off the shackles of bondage to the conventional mystical interpretation.[1] Here the LXX is on the whole faithful to the Hebrew: "My heart overflows with a goodly theme [logos]" (RSV). In this case the inordinate influence of the passage on theological debate arose not from mistranslation but from the isolation of the phrase from its context.

> The occurrence of the term λόγος ... was sufficient to fix upon the clause a sense which it cannot bear, and controversialists were bold enough to interpret these words also of the generation of the Son. At an early stage of the controversy Arius charged some of the orthodox bishops (probably Philogonius) with venturing to speak of the Son as ἐρυγή;[2] but in spite of the reproach thus drawn (not unjustly) from the Greek version of the verse, it maintained its place in later discussions; and Athanasius quotes the words repeatedly without showing the least trace of misgiving as to the cogency of the argument which he draws from them.[3]

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[1] Hom. in Ps. XLIV:3/160E ff. Cf. Origen, De prin. IV, I:5 = Philocalia I:5.

[2] Cf. supra, p. 100.

[3] Westcott, op. cit., p. 343. Cf. Theophilus of Antioch, Ad Autol. II:10.

Basil is both alert and responsive to the broader logic of the situation respecting the Psalm. He writes about the passage at issue:

> Some have previously thought that this is said on the part of the Father concerning the Word who was with him in the beginning, and whom they say he brought forth from his heart and from his very bowels, as it were, so that from the good heart the good Word came forth. It seems to me that this verse refers to the person of the prophet himself, because what follows in the context is not consistent with the interpretation given concerning the Father. For instance, the Father could not have been talking about his own tongue in the verse, "My tongue is the pen of a ready scribe."

Likewise, Basil points out that vs. 3 could hardly refer to the Almighty. "Who then is this person except the prophet, who appropriated unto himself the inspiration [energeia] given him by the Holy Spirit?" Any apparent spiritual or doctrinal advantages to be gained by questionable exegetical procedure are readily relinquished by Basil in favor of a straightforward and logically respectable interpretation, which he goes on to expound.

(4) Ps. 32:6. The situation is otherwise in the case of this verse. Whereas Basil shuns the "higher" interpretation of logos in Ps. 44:2a, he strangely abandons his principle when confronting the same term in Ps. 32:6.[1] The LXX of the verse reads:

> By the word [logos] of the Lord the heavens were established,
> And by the spirit [pneuma] of his mouth is all their might.

The obvious reference of the Psalmist is to the divine utterance by which creation was ordained, as recounted in the first chapter of Genesis ("And God said, 'Let there be light,'" "And God said, 'Let there be a firmament,'" etc.). In Ps. 32:6 also Athanasius exhibits his fondness for investing the septuagintal logos with all the significance of the Incarnation. This time Basil follows him. But it is important to note that though such an inter-

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[1] Hom. in Ps. XXXII:4/135Dff. Cf. Swete, The Holy Spirit in the Ancient Church, pp. 46-7, on Theophilus of Antioch. With Basil's treatment cf. also Greg. Nyssa's Oratio catechetica, chaps. II-V.

pretation of logos involves Basil in contradiction with respect to his procedure in Ps. 44:2a, an overruling doctrinal-practical consideration explains his lapse. This was his anxiety to vindicate the consubstantiality of the Holy Spirit. With that aim he unconsciously (it would seem) subordinates exegetical consistency to doctrinal expediency by accepting the traditional "spiritual" interpretation. Considering the pressures and perils he faced, it is not surprising that he seized upon the opportunity afforded by Ps. 32:6 with so single-minded a purpose. It cannot be said that logos here is a mere construct of nouns and phrases, he points out, or that pneuma is simply a wisp of vapor in the air. Logos is he who was in the beginning with God, and pneuma is the Holy Spirit which has properly been accorded this appellation. Basil unerringly capitalizes the parallelism of logos and pneuma in the verse to exalt the Spirit by presenting him as the equal and co-worker of the Son. At the same time he seeks to retain a valid distinction between the God-word and the God-breath. He appears to sense the danger through their identification of eclipsing rather than exalting pneuma, and seems to be adroitly implying that God's logos could not become a reality unless it took the form of pneuma. Since the logos, like the pneuma, proceeds out of God's mouth, we have both logos and pneuma issuing in the creative achievement--working together in a yoke of equality which points to their consubstantiality. "In the present verse 'Spirit of his mouth' is written, but elsewhere we shall find 'Word of his mouth' mentioned,[1] in order that the Saviour and the Holy Spirit may be understood.[2]

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[1] Cf. Jer. 9:20.

[2] The Ben. reading is, "... that the Saviour and his [autou] Holy Spirit (coming) from the Father may be understood." The ambiguity of autou

For since the Word of the Lord is the Saviour, and the Spirit of his mouth is the Holy Spirit, both have been co-workers in the creation of the heavens and of the powers in them."[1]

(5) Ps. 109:3c. On the whole Basil conforms to the age in this sort of subserviency to the LXX. An outstanding instance of his naive and uncritical acceptance of this secondary text is found in the case of Ps. 109:3c. The Ps. has had great influence on the development of Christian thought, and with relation to the Nicene struggle the last part of vs. 3 is scarcely less interesting than Prov. 8:22. Basil quotes Ps. 109:3c in Adv. Eun. II:17/252D, to which reference has already been made.[2] The Heb. text is admittedly difficult, and the RSV indulges a conjectural rendering of the last part of the passage: "From the womb of the morning like dew your youth ["Heb the dew of your youth": RSV note] will come to you." Kirkpatrick sides with the RV in rendering, "... From the womb of the morning, thou hast the dew of thy youth."[3] The beginning of the verse depicts the zealous and unstinted rallying of the people around a priest-kingly figure ("my lord" of vs. 1) to do mighty exploit in battle for their divinely-appointed leader. In the closing words of the verse the morning is personified as the mother of dew, a figure which may suggest the sudden ap-

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poses an interesting problem in textual criticism: cf. Ben. n., ad loc. Here the absence of autou in many MSS is noted, but Eusebius is said to quote the passage with the autou. Ek tou patros, which is not found in many MSS or in Eusebius, was evidently a marginal gloss on autou, but once it was brought into the text it added to the confusion. The phrase suggests filioque influence.

[1] Cf. supra, pp. 101ff.

[2] Supra, p. 119.

[3] Kirkpatrick, op. cit., pp. 660ff.

pearance of the popular host, their numbers, their youthful freshness, their inspiriting effect upon the king, etc. However, reading the Hebrew with different vowels or following a mutilated text, the LXX renders, "From the womb before the daystar I begat thee." Especially as a consequence of our Lord's use of the Ps., it was inevitable that such a clause should be interpreted of the eternal generation of Christ, and the words "from the womb" became a conventional phrase from at least the outset of the Arian controversy. Near its close we find Basil still pressing the christological interpretation in spite of the fact that the original text has no true reference whatever to the great mystery which it was thus forced to illustrate.[1]

(6) Miscellaneous examples. A few more random instances may be given to show how for the most part Basil evidences neither suspicion nor awareness that the Hebrew which underlies a given Greek word or phrase may be totally different than the term or passage which translates it. On the basis of the LXX of Ps. 1:1c, "(Blessed is the man who ...) does not sit on the seat of pestilences [loimoi]," Basil expatiates at some length on the latter word, drawing out the concept of sin as pestilence and sinners as pestilence-bearers.[2] Within his premises the treatment is entirely valid; the point is that "seat of pestilences" is a far cry from the Heb. "seat of scoffers." At the start of Ep. CLXXXVIII Basil quotes a Greek rendering of Prov. 17:28a without any realization that it attributes wisdom to a fool when he asks a question; the Heb., when he keeps silent. In the homily

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[1] Westcott, op. cit., p. 342.

[2] Hom. in Ps. I:6/96C-97B.

Quod Deus non est auctor malorum 4/75 Basil is confronted with the difficult Isa. 45:7, which portrays God as "making peace and creating [?] evils [ktizōn kaka]." His handling of the delicate passage is singularly adept, but this is in spite of rather than on account of any reference to the Heb.[1] Commenting upon Ps. 7:10c, which he reads, "God tests hearts and viscera righteously," Basil gives a thoroughly Platonic cast to his exposition.[2] Though he brings in antecedents from Hebrew life, his interpretation resolves itself into a consideration of what the Greek terms meant in Greek life. His examples are from the OT, but he treats it as if it were a Greek record. "The voice is Jacob's voice, but the hands are the hands of Esau."

Basil's oikonomia. Basil's relation to the distinctive principle which is given the name "economy" may be introduced by reference to the homily De Spiritu.[3] Paul Henry upholds the disputed authenticity of the little treatise.[4] Its genuineness is prima facie suspect because of its

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[1] "For him who understands the meaning of Scripture," says Basil, neither this passage, Mic. 1:12, Amos 3:6, nor Deut. 32:39 implies an accusation against God as the cause and maker of evil. As for the crucial phrase ktizōn kaka, the meaning is that God rearranges (reorders or converts: metakosmei) evils, ills, miseries, and leads them to betterment. That is, ktizein is explained as not to create initially, but to recreate, as in Ps. 50:12, "Create [ktison, not dēmiourgēson] a clean heart in me, O God." Basil specifically states that the ktisē of Eph. 2:15 does not mean creation ex nihilo, but the transformation of persons already existing. So it is with II Cor. 5:17. In short, God "makes peace" by reconstructing what is evil, by making it over and leading it to improvement: thus peace is a ktisis upon war. Similarly, ktizōn kaka does not mean that God "creates" evil. It means that he reconstructs, repairs, mends, rebuilds evils: he recreates them redemptively, as it were. Cf. p. 186.

[2] Hom. in Ps. VII:6/103E-104B.

[3] Ben. ed. I, 320C-322D.

[4] Les états du texte de Plotin, pp. 162-4.

position as an appendage to the patently spurious Books IV-V of Adv. Eun.[1] A more serious charge is that the short work applies the word theos to the Holy Spirit, whereas in his undisputed writings, according to Henry, Basil studiously avoided the actual phrase, "the Holy Spirit is God."[2] This laid him open to the accusation of compromise,[3] but his reserve was rather dictated by the tense theological-ecclesiastical situation in which his position as a defender of orthodoxy had become all too precarious as it was. This was one of those times when discretion was the better part of valor. And no less a person than Athanasius wrote in his support. Inasmuch as Basil chose to use restraint (oikonomia) in his utterance, his policy is known as his "economy." According to F. W. Farrar, Clement of Alexandria was the first Father to use oikonomia in this sense of "accomodation." In his De comm. not. (P.G. XLV:181) Gregory of Nyssa deals with the sugkatabasis ("accomodation") of the language of Scripture after the manner of Origen.[4] "'Condescension' (συγκατάβασις) occurs in Chrys. Hom. in Tit. iii. The Fathers attribute it not only to St. Paul, but even to our Lord,

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[1] Cf. J. Lebon, "Le pseudo-Basile (Adv. Eunom., IV-V) est bien Didyme d'Alexandrie," Le Muséon, L (1937), 61-83. In the supposedly Basilian Ep. CCXXXVI:1/361A the writer seemingly refers to an observation he has made in Adv. Eun. IV:3/291E, but this may mean only that the compiler of Adv. Eun. IV used Basilian material. Criticism has not followed Dräseke in assigning the two suspect books to Apollinarius of Laodicea.

[2] De Ghellinck (op. cit., III, 158) says that Basil's letters--and they alone--contain the appellation theos with reference to the Third Person; the French scholar devotes a whole chapter (Vol. III, Study vii, pp. 311-38) to the general subject. Cf. also H. B. Swete, On the Early History ... of the Holy Spirit, p. 65: in a footnote he quotes appositely from Basil to instance the latter's "application to the Holy Spirit of the Divine Name," but the citation given is incorrect.

[3] Cf. Greg. Naz., Ep. LVIII/P.G.XXXVII:113-118.

[4] J. H. Srawley, "Cappadocian Theology," Hastings' Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics, III, 212f.

of which the worst instance is in Basil's remark on Matt. xxiv. 37, τοῦτο διὰ προσποιητῆς ἀγνοίας οἰκονομεῖ (Ep. 84)."[1] Perhaps Farrar, whom we have quoted, meant to indicate Matt. 24:36 (his citation of "Ep. 84" as the source of the Greek quotation is certainly wrong); at any rate this verse in its Markan form (Mk. 13:32) is treated by Basil in Ep. CCXXXVI:1-2. In the Markan passage our Lord affirms that absolutely no one except the Father has knowledge of when the end shall occur--not even the heavenly angels or the Son. Basil is concerned with the ignorance of the Son. He points out that the question as put by the Anomoeans is no new one; it is only a restatement of the long-standing Arian argument that if the Son was eternally with the Father, he could not have been thus ignorant. The Greek quoted by Farrar states, "He economizes this [whatever the passage referred to] by pretending ignorance." That is, by feigning ignorance Jesus disposes of the difficulty to the intended satisfaction or understanding of his hearers. In Ep. CCXXXVI Basil points out that in the Matthean text any reference to the Son is omitted. For our present interest the heart of his rationale of Mark is found in par. 1/361D, where he says that if anyone accepts the reputed ignorance as a trait of Him who economizingly (condescendingly, oikonomikōs) took all things upon himself (i.e., according to the Incarnation) and progressed before God and man in wisdom and grace, such a one will not be carried beyond the bounds of a conception consistent with piety. In other words, Basil seems to be saying that the "ignorance" of Christ pertains only to his humanity.

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[1] F. W. Farrar, History of Interpretation (1885 Bampton Lectures), p. 187, n. 2.

Chapter VII

BIBLICAL CANON AND TEXT

Basil's Concern with Questions of Canon Incidental.[1] During the earliest Christian centuries the LXX was the decisive factor in the regulation of the OT canon for the church. The influence of the Greek version was a natural consequence of the esteem in which it was held on all sides, which is not to mention the fear of some of the Fathers that the Jews had falsified the Hebrew text. Hence we find the apostolic Fathers quoting the protocanonical and deuterocanonical books of the LXX on a virtual par. Only with the emergence of the Palestinian canon in the fourth century did a change of attitude take place. In the case of the three Cappadocians, we find that Gregory of Nazianzus favored the Palestinian canon in spite of his almost exclusive adherence to the LXX. In the poem De veris Scripturae libris[2] he sets forth as being genuinely OT books only the protocanonical except Esther, an exception which may be traced to a reverence for Athanasius. Practically however he quotes from the two classes of septuagintal writings without making any sharp distinction between them. Basil was more independent, critical, and consistent, though he and his brother Gregory have very little to say in the area of canon. Both have recourse to the

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[1] The treatment is especially indebted to H. Weiss, op. cit., pp. 40-49.

[2] P.G. XXXVII:472-4.

deuterocanonical writings without apology, though by no means as often or as significantly as to the protocanonical. This is why H. Weiss' remark is misleading that "Basil hardly seems to know the difference between the two classes of Old Testament books but quotes them equally often--except the books of Moses, the Psalms, and the four greater prophets, to all of which he is partial."[1] Weiss' further statement that Basil "makes use of all the deuterocanonical writings without exception" must be taken with the grain-of-salt consideration that the German scholar cites from contested works such as the Com. in Isa. proph. and the Adv. Eun. IV-V.[2] Basil's fondness for protocanonical Proverbs is reflected in a certain prominence of deuterocanonical Wisdom[3] and Ecclesiasticus.[4] Less conspicuously the books of the Maccabees,[5] Judith,[6] Tobit,[7] as well as the deuterocanonical additions to Esther[8] and Daniel--the Song of the Three Holy Children,[9] the History of Susanna,[10] and Bel and the Dragon[11]--are cited amid the protocanonical.

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[1] H. Weiss, op. cit., p. 45. According to a chart on p. 20 of Clarke's The Ascetic Works ..., there is only a single deuterocanonical quotation throughout the whole of the Ascetica as included in his volume. On the other hand the fact that in the Discourse on Ascetic Discipline 1/212C the monk is to read "authentic" books only and have nothing to do with "apocryphal" would seem to militate against the genuineness of the treatise.

[2] H. Weiss, op. cit., p. 45.

[3] E. g., Wisd. 1:7a, De Spir. S. XXIII:54/46D.

[4] E. g., Ecclus. 20:30, Hom. in Ps. XLVIII:2/178E.

[5] E. g., II Macc. 7, Ep. VI:2/79C.

[6] E. g., Jth. 9:5,6, De Spir. S. VIII:19/16E.

[7] E. g., Tob. 3:6,15, Hom. in mar. Jul. 5/38C.

[8] E. g., Est. 14:11, Adv. Eun. II:19/254D. Basil's "the most wise Esther" here is quite a contrast to the Nazianzan's disdain for even the canonical book. Cf. "the most wise Solomon" in the hom. In prin. Prov. 1/97E, where Basil attributes to him only Prov., Eccles., and Cant.

[9] E. g., Dan. 3:47, 50, Hom. in Ps. XXVIII:6/120E.

[10] E. g., Dan. 13:50b, hom. In prin. Prov. 13/109B.

[11] E. g., Dan. 14:33ff., De Spir. S. XXIII:54/46D.

In the area of the NT canon the three Cappadocians reflect the uncertainty which still surrounded some of the NT writings in the middle of the fourth century. While in the Occident the Pauline authorship and hence the canonicity of the letter to the Hebrews was contested almost to Basil's day, he and the two Gregorys exemplify the congeniality of the East toward the letter. It is unhesitatingly included by Basil among the writings of Paul and so quoted.[1] Turning to the seven catholic epistles, Basil and his confreres again represent the mood of the Orient--as instanced by the Peshitto and the Antiochians--in their suspicion of all but Jas., I Pet., and I Jn. Even then these three letters are cited but rarely by Basil (e. g., Jas. in R. brev. XXXV, and I Pet. in De fide 5/218B). As for the Apocalypse, the Nazianzan skips it entirely in his first list[2] and virtually rejects it in the more elaborate second one,[3] but the Nyssenian appears to agree with his brother Basil, who after quoting Jn. 1:1 and discussing the verb, continues: "But the same evangelist shows us the meaning of ēn in another place," namely as it appears in Rev. 1:8.[4] Thus does Basil declare himself unmistakably for the apostolic origin of the Apocalypse.

Critical Attention Given the Basilian Text Slight. When we turn to the question of the biblical text employed by Basil we enter upon a complicated field. The goal in this area of investigation is clear enough--the

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[1] E. g., in Adv. Eun. I:14/227A. As H. Weiss points out (op. cit., pp. 46f.), the fact that amidst a plethora of quotations in the Morals from the Gospels, Acts, and the Pauline epistles, Hebrews is cited only once (LXIX:2), may be due to its peculiar contents.

[2] De v. Scrip. lib., P.G. XXXVII:474, line 38.

[3] Poem Ad Seleucum, P.G. XXXVII:1597f., lines 316-8.

[4] Adv. Eun. II:14/249D.

determination of the pedigree and relationships of the scriptural text exhibited by the Old and NT quotations of Basil. In the case of this Father such an inquiry presents all sorts of problems, and, as we shall see, nothing approaching a final answer is possible in the present state of affairs. For one thing, the text of the Basilian writings themselves must be reliably established before any fruitful attempt can be made to analyze the sacred text which they exhibit. Where a patristic text has not been critically tested the quotations from the Bible are the first to suffer, and the absence of a dependable text is the first great obstacle which confronts us with reference to Basil. The vast bulk of his writings is to be had in no better edition than the Benedictine of 1721-1730, which, though one of the most carefully done of the Maurist publications, is far from being a critical edition in any modern acceptance of the term.[1] The Basilian works which have received scientific critical attention in any sense are indeed very few.

(1) The Greek text of the Hexaemeron which Stanislas Giet issued in 1949 (with competent French translation) is modern chiefly in appearance: it follows the Ben. text except where Garnier chose the reading of the editi (the 1618 edition = earlier editions) against the concert of MSS. Though Giet himself points out that about 120 MSS of this work are known to exist, he attempts no classification of any of them geneologically and not a single new MS is collated.[2]

(2) When all is said and done, the 4-vol. Greek ed. of the Letters

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[1] Vide Addendum D at the end of this chapter.

[2] Cf. reviews by dom D. Amand in Revue d'histoire ecclésiastique, XLVII (1952), 222-8, and L'Antiquité Classique, XXI (1952), 2d fasc. (?).

(with English trans.) by Roy J. Deferrari in the Loeb series can only be described as a rather unbelievable piece of mediocrity. With sovereign disregard of the indispensable preparatory labors of the abbé M. Bessières (this in spite of lip service rendered the latter in Vol. I, p. viii), Deferrari published from 1926 to 1934 a text which--chose remarquable!--is essentially the same as the Ben. ed. and its reprints, even including many of their typographical errors. In the case of the fifty-eight letters of his first volume, the editor-translator points out that four of the six MSS he collated were used by the Benedictines, the two new ones being the 11th c. Paris. gr. Sup. 763 and the Paris. gr. 967 copied in 1377; actually the Benedictines utilized the latter MS secondarily as well. The formula employed by Deferrari for editing the more than 300 letters of his Vols. II-IV is unvarying, the statement of it in Vol. III (p. v) being typical:

> All the letters included here, with the exception of Number CLXXXIX, appear in the MS. known as Coislinianus 237 (sig. = E). No letter of this volume, however, appears in any of the other MSS. collated by the author. Accordingly, the readings from E are my own, all others have been taken over from the Benedictine edition, and their sigla have been kept in all cases, even though they will often appear quite strange and even amusing to the modern text-critic.

In short, what Deferrari offers us here is the Ben. ed. plus an arbitrarily chosen 11th c. MS, one moreover which Bessières puts in the less valuable Bo classification. The speciousness of the Loeb edition is exposed in an incisive manner by the Swedish patrologist, Anders Cavallin, in his Studien zu den Briefen des hl. Basilius (Lund: Gleerupska Universitetsbokhandeln, 1944), pp. 20-27 and 121-2. By means of text-critical studies along the lines established by Bessières, Cavallín enlarges upon the abbé's thesis in a work characterized by deservedly astringent criticism of Deferrari. "Merciless" as this criticism is, dom D. Amand concurs in it as "amply jus-

tified by the facts." "These severe but just pages," he continues, "ought to be meditated by future editors of Basil."[1] --And by future translators as well. Else Deferrari's shortcomings would not have been propagated in a new form by Sister Agnes Claire Way, who in the first volume of her recent translation of the Letters (New York: Fathers of the Church, Inc., 1951) refers to Deferrari's as "a modern critical edition" (p. xvii). It is to be assumed that responsible scholarship in this field would rather have been guided by the presumably definitive critical edition which Y. Courtonne is presently preparing overseas (vide infra).

(3) In recent times critical attention has been given the Book on the Holy Spirit by two scholars, the edition of C. F. H. Johnston having appeared about sixty years ago, while B. Pruche published his text and French translation as recently as 1946. Johnston expanded the base of his edition considerably beyond the six MSS employed by Garnier. But it is important to note two limitations in the Englishman's work. (a) He did not make his own collation of the MSS used by Garnier but takes the latter's work for granted, a presumption which is open to question. (b) Nor did the English scholar base his edition upon a prior classification of the broad field of MSS genealogically: having concluded his work he merely gives two hints which may be said to constitute the embryo of such a filiation--"V is found to agree frequently with R_2, m, and o," and "v agrees most frequently with M." It could well be on these grounds that Amand, while admitting Johnston's to be "a quite good edition," yet maintains that "it is by no means

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[1] Amand, Rev. bén., LVI (1945-46), 149; cf. de Ghellinck, Nouv. Rev. théol., LXX (1948), 865.

definitive in the matter of text."[1] No new textual contribution is made by Pruche. No further MSS are collated. Rather, the French scholar is dependent upon Johnston in both spheres, translation and text. Whereas Johnston observes a posteriori that his edition "contains but few important modifications of the text of the Benedictine edition," Pruche elects a priori to follow the Ben. ed. as far as possible simply on the discreditable basis of preference. Admittedly therefore, to use his own words, Pruche's edition "is only the Benedictine text improved by Johnston except that some important readings of the Maurist edition are maintained"--important evidently because the Maurists rather than the MSS give them! This may throw light on the reason that Amand in a personal letter refers to Pruche's edition as "déplorable": the full significance of this adjective is charitably but unsparingly given by Amand in his review in Byzantion, XX (1950), 364-75.

(4) In the case of the Pros tous neous or Address to Youths, its historic popularity has secured it a critical attention out of all proportion to its value for our present purpose. Although the little treatise is full of classical allusions, it is doubtful if it contains a single direct biblical quotation. (5) However, the edition of the Address by F. Boulenger is of especial interest in that the latter's MS classification is adopted by Y. Courtonne as the basis of his critical edition of the homilies In illud, "Destruam horrea mea ..." and In divites (misc. homs. VI and VII). Here again though the number of scriptural quotations involved is practically negligible. Since in some MSS the Pros tous neous is inappropriately

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[1] Amand, Rev. bén., LVI (1945-46), 142.

placed among the miscellaneous homilies as XXII, it is not surprising that all thirteen of the ancient MSS basic to the abbé Boulenger's edition also contain Homs. VI and VII (the abbé made his choice from among more than eighty widely-scattered MSS). Even after a minute study of six additional MSS which do not contain the Pros tous neous, Courtonne found it possible to confine himself to Boulenger's three primary documents. Paradoxically enough, these same three MSS were used by Garnier, but this time the latter's shortcomings may be relative not to the fewness or the inferiority of his sources but to the fact that he extended himself too broadly and was too hospitable to readings of the four additional, less valuable MSS which he employed.

So much for the modern critical work which has been done in the direction of a definitive text of Basil; these four or five scant instances represent the total effort thus far. In a word, the state of the Basilian text at present simply closes the door to any conclusive work on the biblical text which it exhibits. However, the comparatively immediate future ought to bring some salutary changes in this dismal picture. For one thing, dom David Amand de Mendieta is currently completing a scientific edition of that great and highly original classic of Basil's, the Hexaemeron. The French scholar's latest letter to the writer, under date of October 16, 1952, states that it ought to take him about a year to finish his task. His edition will be published by the Berlin Academy of Sciences in the collection "Die griechische christliche Schriftsteller." Secondly, dom D. Amand's letter contained the further word that his friend, dom Édouard Rouillard of the abbey of Wisques, will publish the first volume of a two-volume edition of fifteen select moral homilies of Basil (with French

trans.) in 1953 or 1954. The edition will appear as a part of the "Sources chrétiennes," and according to Amand will be "revisée sur les mss." and "du bon travail." Thirdly, M. le Chanoine Yves Courtonne is well advanced in the task of producing what promises to be the definitive edition of the Letters. He writes under date of November 2, 1952, that he has completed the first volume of his work, but that the Association G. Budé, under whose auspices the edition is being published, does not have the money to print it at present: he pleads for an American Maecenas to provide the $3,000 it would take. Finally, dom J. Gribomont hopes to have his critical edition of the Ascetica off the presses early in 1953. With these highly significant new resources, the materials should be in hand for a sufficiently reliable and comprehensive analysis of Basil's biblical quotations to provide some dependable answers as to the identity and characteristics of the Old and NT texts which he used.

The Human Equation in Patristic Quotations. Even with a Basilian text in our hands that purports to have been scientifically established, a second major wall of difficulty presents itself. If in the nineteenth century, printed editions have been known to conform the quotations of a Father to the current text, how much greater the likelihood that earlier copyists upon whose MSS our knowledge depends substituted contemporary readings for the originals. In addition to conscious alteration, the possibility of unconscious mistake in all its forms must be reckoned with. This opens up the whole domain of familiar scribal errors--haplography, dittography, homoioteleuton, etc. Besides these purely mechanical mistakes on the part of the copyist, the unrelieved tedium of his task must often have betrayed him into completing scriptural quotations with his mind's

eye, with the result that similar or parallel passages were substituted for the text before him or even congenial vagrant readings inserted in place of the true ones. In addition to the uncertainties arising from the frailties of ancient copyist and modern editor, the vagaries to which scriptural quotations were subject at the hands of the original author himself add still more to the complexity of the human equation. First of all is the question of whether a Father is quoting from memory or from MS or copy.[1] "The fact of quotations being given from memory explains the following phenomena in patristic quotations, none of which therefore substantiate various readings, (i) Combinations of different passages; (ii) transpositions; (iii) sense renderings, including changes of syntax, adaptation, use of synonymous terms."[2] Nestle lays down the canon that "only when a quotation is given by an author several times in exactly the same form is it safe to depend on the actual wording, or when in a commentary, e. g., the context agrees with the quoted text."[3] A further set of complications takes the form of the possibility that the Father may have had more than one MS before him at a time and may have drawn from them a composite reading. Or he may be carrying over quotations from writings which he assails or to which he refers. Again, he may be borrowing a predecessor's or a teacher's lan-

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1 "Griesbach professes to have given a series of criteria for determining this, undoubtedly the most important point in reference to patristic quotations": Ll. J. M. Bebb, "The Evidence of the Early Versions and Patristic Quotations on the Text of the Books of the New Testament," Studia Biblica et Ecclesiastica: Essays Chiefly in Biblical and Patristic Criticism, Vol. II (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1890), p. 214.

2 Bebb, op. cit., p. 215.

3 Eberhard Nestle, Introduction to the Textual Criticism of the Greek New Testament, trans. from the 2d ed. (with corrections and additions by the author) by Wm. Edie and ed. with a preface by Allan Menzies (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1901), pp. 145 f.

guage. It is not inconceivable that some so-called variae lectiones may have arisen from the Father's misreading of the Greek or even from such hapless mistakes as the wrong division of the unspaced words of a Greek uncial. There is also the chance that unwittingly or no the Father may have adopted a marginal reading or even indulged a conjectural one; especially in an active literary center copies would be rapidly multiplied and circulated, and fashionable emendations and corrections would thus gain currency. Related to this last point and lying even more deeply in the area of the subjective is the factor of polemical bias, manifested in the temptation to bend Scripture to the controversial or doctrinal purpose in hand. Bebb however feels that the influence of polemical purpose may in some cases serve to lessen rather than to increase the distortion of Scripture. Much depends, he says, "on the object for which the quotation is made; thus for a polemical purpose close adherence to the letter is necessary, and so in controversial treatises we find as a rule exactness, while for a preacher more freedom would be allowed."[1] Finally, assuming that the author quoted accurately, the copyist copied faithfully, and the editor edited correctly, it must not be forgotten that the investigator himself is liable to overt and hidden errors of many kinds,[2] as in assigning a patristic quotation to a wrong passage of Scripture or failing to distinguish when a citation is intended only as an indirect quotation or allusion and

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[1] Bebb, op. cit., p. 216.

[2] --Thus Deferrari's a priorism, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 59, with reference to Ep. VIII (an unauthentic letter anyway), where I Cor. 8:5-6 is cited: "Note Basil's accurate quotation, with apparently purposeful omission of irrelevant material," which is evidently to assume that Basil had the Greek equivalent of the Douay version before him.

not as a verbatim reproduction. And once the true reading of a biblical quotation in a Father has been established, it is a fundamental canon applicable to versions as well as to patristic quotations that no variant should be accepted on the authority of either of these kinds of testimony unless it has MS support of some kind.

A quick assessment of Basil's writings with reference to such factors as these reveals that many of them must have important weight in his case. Basil himself indicates that on occasion he was confronted by more than one MS or copy. We think of his voluminous correspondence and of Eunomius in connection with the possibility of his having carried over quotations from extraneous sources. Origen, Gregory Thaumaturgus, and even Eustathius of Sebaste are prime instances of teachers from whom it would have been a most natural thing for him to borrow. Again, Caesarea was a quite thriving cultural and ecclesiastical center[1] in which he must have been exposed to variant readings borne in and out on the tides of literary and spiritual commerce; the continuous controversy in which he was engaged and his intense biblical interest would seem to leave no doubt of this. The fact that Basil's use of Scripture must have been affected by polemical purpose was noted in the following form by Richard Simon in 1693 with reference to the Morals:

> It is relevant to observe that if this Father does not always agree in his citations with today's copies [of the Bible], it is not necessary to conform the latter to his collection. For besides the fact that he may have cited certain passages from memory, it sometimes convenienced him to accommodate them to his subject, not only in this writing, but in several others.[2]

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[1] Greg. Naz., Orat. XLIII:13.

[2] R. Simon, Histoire critique des principaux commentateurs du Nouveau Testament ... (Rotterdam: Reinier Leers, 1693), p. 111.

Whether under the stress of argument Basil is driven to adaptation, as thus suggested, or to accuracy, as suggested by Bebb (supra, p. 207), is the question. There would seem to be no doubt that Basil habitually quotes from memory. Furthermore, when he so quotes, he is by no means always beholden to our modern concepts of literary or literal accuracy. He tends to subordinate his quotations to his thoughts in characteristic Greek fashion. He is of the heritage of Plato, who quotes things and violates his quotations at the same time; it is an old Greek custom, so to speak, to take an opponent's words and mold them to one's own advantage. In a study entitled St. Basil and Greek Literature, L. V. Jacks comments on the Basilian use of classical authors. "It will be seen that Basil regularly takes the indirect method, seldom endeavoring to reproduce exact speech. When he makes the attempt he is frequently wrong."[1] His skillful use of the classics in indirect speech is seen in the way in which he capitalizes the opportunity to begin and end as he wishes and to quote as his need justifies. Finally, turning to the area of the copying of MSS, it is highly probable that because they were so jealously guarded by the educated prelates of the East, Basil's works were not as subject to the vagaries of copyists as the writings of lesser personalities.

A Glimpse at Basil from the Biblical-text Standpoint. With uncertainties of the foregoing nature to cope with, it would seem almost a waste of time to seek any conclusive answers to biblical-text questions from work based upon the Ben. ed. Nevertheless the attempt has been made. In the case of Clarke it is strictly incidental to his investigation of the au-

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[1] L. V. Jacks, St. Basil and Greek Literature ("Catholic University of America Patristic Studies"; Washington: Cath. U. of Amer., 1922), p. 27.

thenticity of the Ascetica. His findings in the area of biblical citations are summarized on pp. 19-27 of The Ascetic Works of Saint Basil. After admitting that "the older editions of the Fathers are notoriously unsatisfactory as regards biblical quotations and the labour involved in this section may seem misplaced," Clarke states:

> One gets the impression that the Benedictine edition of Basil followed the available MSS with great care; the textual notes show that as much care was bestowed on the biblical quotations as elsewhere. A critical edition of De Spiritu Sancto was published by C. F. H. Johnston (Oxford 1892). The variations from the Benedictine text are slight, approximately two per page, and but rarely is the sense affected. Out of 200 quotations from O. and N.T. all but five agree with the Benedictine text. One of these is given in Garnier's notes as a variant. The other four are N.T. readings which are not found in Tischendorf's or von Soden's apparatus. If an editor of the text of the Ascetica reached similar conclusions to Mr. Johnston's in editing De Spiritu Sancto, the margin of error in the following tables would be about 2 per cent.[1]

In this connection mention might be made of a not too familiar contribution of Dean John Wm. Burgon. In the last century enormous labor was expended by Dean Burgon in indexing the NT quotations of the Fathers for the purpose of textual criticism. The result of his work is contained in sixteen large MS volumes, which were deposited in the British Museum after his death. The Basilian indices occupy folios 218-369 of Add. MS 33423. Only the scriptural chapter-and-verse citations are given, not the biblical texts in full. Due to copyright restrictions and to confusion in the transmission of the dean's estate since his death in 1888, it was only after some little effort that the Museum consented to make a microfilm copy of the Basilian index. This microfilm has been deposited with the Libraries of Columbia University in the City of New York as an addendum to the present dissertation.

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[1] Clarke, The Ascetic Works ..., p. 19.

From the standpoint of an analysis of Basil's biblical text, it is in Johnston's edition of the De Spir. S. that the principal body of modern critical material--fragmentary enough indeed--is to be found. None of the scriptural quotations in this or in any of Basil's works is very extensive, the longest being two or possibly three verses. If a careful comparison is made between the Basilian NT citations in the De Spir. S. and the textus receptus,[1] the two will be found to agree verbally only seldom, although where direct quotation is probably intended the differences seem to be slight. For instance, particles (de, gar, ge, men), prepositions or possessives (en, hēmōn), and the articular sign of the dative (tō) appear or disappear indifferently in the Basilian readings. As compared with the TR, Basil's citations throughout the Ben. ed. are crowded with transpositions, combinations, adaptations, sense renderings, and use of synonymous terms. At the same time Basil's approach to the biblical text as he found it in the Greek was critically alert and enlightened. In connection with Gen. 1:11a he proposes the sense emendation, "Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb yielding seed after its kind." "In this manner," he continues, "we can re-establish the order of the words, of which the construction seems faulty as it now stands, and the economy of nature will be rigorously observed."[2] Perhaps the awkwardness in the thought of the passage had been suggested to him by his perusal of Origen, who had pondered the difficulty in his homilies on Genesis.[3] In any case the correction of Basil is modest

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[1] Oxford 1873 ed., the text that is being used as a basis in the International Critical Apparatus Project.

[2] Hex. V:2/40Ef.

[3] P.G. XII:92Cf., Selecta in Genesim.

and quite befitting an exegete who was solicitous of the letter but not a worshipper at the shrine of literal infallibility. As for variant readings, Basil's interest is reflected in such a passage as Hom. in Ps. XLVIII:1/177B. We have noted his comment upon Eph. 1:1b.[1] We have also noted that in R. brev. CCLI/500A, where he cites Luke 22:36a as an instance of scriptural use of "the imperative mode of speech for the prophetic," Basil remarks, aratō ētoi arei; houtō gar kai ta polla tōn antigraphōn echei.[2] Whereas today the only witness for arei is Cod. Bezae, in Basil's time "most copies" had the Western reading. In De Spir. S. XXI:52/44AB Basil appends to II Thes. 3:5 of the TR the phrase, "for tribulations."[3] The Ben. note (trans. by Jackson, NpNF, ad loc.) is significant:

> It must be admitted that these words are not found in the sacred text and are wanting in three manuscripts of this work. Moreover, in the Regius Quintus they are only inserted by a second hand, but since they are shortly afterwards repeated by Basil, as though taken from the sacred context, I am unwilling to delete them, and it is more probable that they were withdrawn from the manuscripts from which they are wanting because they were not found in the apostle, than added, without any reason at all, to the manuscripts in which they occur.

These are some of the more explicit, striking, or unusual biblical-text features exhibited by the textus receptus of Basil--the Ben. ed. While its general accuracy is undoubtedly sufficient to furnish trustworthy results in the broader areas of biblical ideas and doctrines, the Maurist edition is not fitted to be an instrument of research where the minutiae of letters and syllables are involved. Systematic inquiry on this score must wait

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[1] Supra, pp. 179f.

[2] Cf. supra, p. 112, n. 1. That Basil could also read his classics with a critical eye is reflected in the Address to Youths, where at one point he concludes a poetic citation with the words, "... as Homer said--if indeed this work be really Homer's."

[3] This may echo II Cor. 1:8, 7:4, Eph. 3:13, etc.

until the text has been critically established.

Generally, it appears that in the case of the OT Basil's reliance was upon the Hexapla of Origen or rather upon the Greek components which made up the principal part of it--LXX, Aquila, Symmachus, Theodotion. Basil sometimes compares their variants, but he was not limited to these versions.[1] In the Hex. IV:5/37BC he is struggling with the exposition of Gen. 1:9. "Let us follow the thought Scripture gives us," he admonishes.

> Not only the water which was covering the earth flowed off from it, but all that which had filtered into its depths withdrew in obedience to the irresistible order of the sovereign Master. "And it was so." This is quite enough to show that the Creator's voice had effect. However in several editions [en pollois tōn antigraphōn: e.g., the LXX] there is added, "And the water which was under the heavens gathered itself unto one place and the dry land was seen," words which other interpreters have not given and which Hebrew usage does not seem to have. In fact, after the assertion, "And it was so," it is superfluous to repeat exactly the same thing. In accurate copies these words are marked with an obelus, which is the sign of rejection.

Jackson points out that the addition in question appears in neither Aquila, Symmachus, nor Theodotion.[2] In other words, Basil affirms his use of "several editions" besides these. His reference to the obelus seems to confirm his use of the Hexapla inasmuch as this siglum was a characteristic of the edition of Origen and could hardly have been used in other recensions without confusion. Basil must also have employed the version of the martyr Lucian, which according to Jerome was mainly used in Syria, Asia Minor, and Constantinople. As for the NT, the text employed by Basil was quite certainly in the main the same as the official ecclesiastical text associated with Constantinople and the regions under her influence. Souter points out

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[1] Cf. e.g. Hom. in Ps. XLIV:4/162A and XXVIII:1/114C.

[2] NpNF, p. 74b, n. 1; Ambrose however in Hex. III:5 follows the LXX in approving of it.

that according to von Soden it is the text found in the purple MSS N, O, Σ, and Φ. "All are of the sixth century, written in gold or silver letters on purple-stained vellum, perhaps in the same workshop at Constantinople. All are defective, but each serves in a measure to supplement the defects of the others." Although Burkitt relates N and Σ to Constantinople in the age of Justinian, Souter notes that the two views need not be inconsistent.[1]

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[1] Alexander Souter, The Text and Canon of the New Testament (New York: Scribner's, 1913), p. 30. More specifically, von Soden holds that it is a mixture of his I and K texts which was used by the Cappadocian Fathers and is preserved in the purple MSS: the I or Hierosoluma form corresponds roughly to the Western text of Westcott and Hort, the K or koinē--produced at Antioch by Lucian--to their Syrian-Antiochian category (ibid., p. 133).

ADDENDUM D
The MS Basis of the Benedictine Edition

Ever since its publication in 1721-1730, the three-volume folio Greek-Latin edition of the Benedictine Maurists, Garnier and Maran, has been the edition par excellence of Basil. Its 1839 reprint, edited by Ludovici de Sinner (A. Jahn collaborating) and published by Gaume Brothers, is the most usable form of the work, while the Migne reprint of 1857 (-1886) in Vols. XXIX-XXXII of his encyclopedic Patrologia is the best known. Inasmuch as the Maurist edition is the vulgate, some reference to its formation and MS background is inescapable. Julien Garnier of course was the prime mover in the work, to which he devoted virtually his mature lifetime. Bold and incisive, he contrasts sharply with his cautious and conservative confrere, Prudent Maran, to whose lot the completion of Vol. III fell after the death of Garnier in 1725. For his monumental production Garnier drew almost exclusively upon the resources of Paris. He received inestimable aid in the laborious work of collation from his skilled collaborator, dom Francis Faverolles. In the first place, the editor had access to the rich treasure of Greek MSS which Duke and Bishop Henri-Ch. du Cambout de Coislin had inherited. Secondly, Garnier saw to the collation of several MSS of the equally remarkable library of the distinguished Colbert family. Finally, principal use was made of the MSS in the Royal Library, the Regii of the Ben. ed.[1] Although they had already been collated after a fashion by the Jesuit Fronton du Duc for his 1618 edition and by the radical Dominican

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[1] Vide the MS catalogues of A. Jacob and H. Omont.

François Combefis in his critical notes posthumously published in 1679, they were carefully examined anew by Garnier and his collaborator, and it is in large measure upon these collations that the Benedictine based his text.[1]

By recourse to the present-day Bibliotheque Nationale, heir to the Royal Library of Garnier's day, it is possible to analyze our editor's use of his available material, especially since the Colbertini were sold to the Royal Library in 1732 (the Coislin collection was entrusted to St. Germain before 1720). Such an analysis is likewise favored by the fact that each of the Benedictine volumes includes an "elenchus veterum librorum ad quos exacta et emendata sunt Basilii opera" which specifies the MSS collated by/for Garnier in the case of each of the groups of Basilian writings; reference is also made to earlier editors who used these codices. Dom David Amand de Mendieta undertakes such a comparison of the Garnier-Maran inventories with what must have been the total Parisian MS pool on which the editors drew.[2] He examines the writings of Basil under ten categories.

(1) In the case of the Hexaemeron, there were probably eighteen MSS (including the very old Coislinianus graecus 229 now lost) accessible in the Parisian libraries, ranging in date from the 9th/10th to the 16th centuries inclusive.[3] Garnier employs twelve[4] of them, tending to the earlier

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[1] So Amand, whom we have been following, in Rev. bén., LVI, p. 129, but in Rev. d'hist. ecclés., XLVII, p. 226, he states that "Garnier collated personally almost none of the MSS which he utilized in his edition": it was Faverolles who did by far the greater part of this exacting work.

[2] D. Amand, "Essai d'une histoire critique des éditions générales grecques et gréco-latines de s. Basile de Césarée," part 7, Revue bénédictine, LVI (1945-46), 129-46.

[3] The datings are evidently according to H. Omont.

[4] Amand's tenth entry on p. 131 (op. cit.), the modern Parisinus gr.

ones in his choice; among the six which he neglected only the Coislinianus 228 is early (11th c.).

(2) For the Homilies on the Psalms Garnier chose fifteen out of twenty-one 9th/10th to 14th c. MSS available either in the collections of Colbert or Coislin or in the Royal Library. His choice includes the five earliest MSS, but Amand calls his failure to examine (or to cause to have examined) the Coisliniani graecae 48 (10th c.), 47, 49, and 50 (all 11th c.) "a regrettable omission." In nineteen out of the twenty-one MSS just referred to, the corpus of Homilies on the Psalms is followed by (or at least contains) a corpus of (3) miscellaneous homilies, made up of from eleven to thirty-five items. In addition to these nineteen MSS there were five more in the Parisian libraries which contained the miscellaneous homilies (one 10th c., four 14th c.). Out of a total of twenty-four codices thus available for editing this category, only seven were collated by/for Garnier.[1] Although he avoided the latest MSS, most of the seventeen which he neglected date from the 10th-11th c. His choice appears to be purely arbitrary; at least no principle of selection is discernible. Taking almost the same group of codices, then, Garnier collates (or there were collated for him) the folios of fifteen out of twenty-one MSS for the one set of homilies, the folios of only seven out of twenty-four for the other set.

(4) In contrast to the miscellaneous homilies, the relation of the number of MSS used to the number available is very high in the case of the

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959, should show in heavy type on p. 132, so that Garnier collated (or there were collated for him) eleven Parisian MSS instead of ten (excluding the Cois. gr. 229) as indicated by Amand. A thirteenth MS utilized was an unidentified "Bodl.[eianus] codex a doctissimo viro Joanne Wolphio collatus."

[1] Garnier also mentions having used "Ducaeani codices" and "Combefisiani codices."

five books Against Eunomius (the first three authentic, the last two by Didymus of Alexandria). Out of eight 11th-16th c. Parisian MSS accessible to him, Garnier neglected to employ only one, but it was the Parisinus gr. 500, one of three 11th c. MSS in the group. This MS also contains both sets of homilies (Psalms and miscellaneous), and was ignored by the editor in these two categories as well.

(5) The highly suspect Commentary on the Prophet Isaiah attributed to Basil was similarly contained in eight 9th-16th c. Parisian MSS, all but two of which, a 9th c. Coislinianus and a 15th c. Colbertinus, were collated by/for Garnier.

Amand's next three categories have a very close MS affinity. There are seven 10th-12th c. MSS of (6) the Ascetica in the B. N. today, all of which were available to Garnier in Paris. He collated the five latest, in addition to the 11th c. Paris. Cois. gr. 231 containing only an ascetic discourse and the two Regulae. He also availed himself of the variants in Andre Schott's collation of the very old codex gr. 1 Bibliothecae publicae of Leyden, and of those in the margins of the editio princeps of the Ascetica, the Venetian of 1535. All of the seven MSS referred to contain (7) the unauthentic Monastic Constitutions, and five of them (8) the two unauthentic books On Baptism. The same three MSS (one 11th c., two 12th) were collated by/for Garnier for both these categories, plus a fourth for the Monastic Constitutions--the 10th c. Parisinus gr. 476 also used in editing the Hexaemeron and the Homilies on the Psalms. In all three categories Garnier neglected the two oldest of the seven MSS at his disposal, which he could ill afford to do.

(9) In the case of the Book on the Holy Spirit, the elenchus of the

Ben. Vol. III contains merely this scrap of information, undoubtedly by Maran: "Liber de Spiritu sancto collatus cum quinque Regiis codicibus & uno Colbertino." C. F. H. Johnston has been able to identify these six MSS.[1] Strikingly, this is the only category all of whose MSS appear in the editing of other writings. Five of them (two 11th c. and three 14th c.) were utilized for the Adversus Eunomium, and two of these five for the Hexaemeron as well. The sixth, the 10th c. Parisinus gr. 506, was used for the Letters; it is in fact the oldest of the six MSS in Bessières' Ab group. Nine MSS now in the B. N. were at Garnier's disposal, ranging in date from the 10th to the 16th c. He failed to employ a 10th, the 13th, and the 16th c. MSS.

(10) Finally, thanks to the pioneer labors of the abbé Marius Bessières, edited by C. H. Turner,[2] the MS pattern behind the Letters of Basil has been revealed, and by means of this study we are able to check the Ben. ed. rather closely. Although here as elsewhere Garnier-Maran based their edition upon the Parisian edition of 1618, it was in editing the correspondence that they did some of their most careful and extensive work. As contrasted with the fragmentary mention concerning the MSS collated for the Liber de Spiritu Sancto, about a third of a folio page is devoted to the MS basis of the Letters in the elenchus of the last Ben. volume. The explanation states that "for the epistles of St. Basil the Great three very an-

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[1] Johnston points out that the codex anglicanus of the Bodleian Library is also cited two times by the Maurists.

[2] This estimable study, "La tradition manuscrite de la correspondance de saint Basile," first appeared in the Journal of Theological Studies, XXI-XXIII (1919-1922). It was reprinted in book form by the Clarendon Press (Oxford) in 1923 in an edition limited to 100 copies.

cient codices were found most useful," and adds, "To these three codices, at least when they agree among themselves, it has seemed best to us to attach greater importance than to all the others." The three primary MSS referred to are (using their modern sigla), the Parisinus Cois. gr. 237, the Parisinus Suppl. gr. 1020 (the Harleianus given to Garnier: cf. infra), and the Laurentianus gr. IV. 14 (the excellent Florentine Mediceus collated by Antonio Salvini). All are 11th c. (the apparatus often refers to them as "tres vetustissimi codices"), and while all belong to Bessières' embranchement B, the first and last are members of Bo, the leading family of the B branch according to Turner. The elenchus next mentions ("Huc accessere ....") the 10th c. Parisinus gr. 506 (the Maurists assigned it to the 13th c.) and the Parisinus gr. 967, copied in 1377. The former codex, employed in editing the Liber de Spiritu Sancto, is the only one used in any of the other nine categories of writings. To this second rank also belongs, among other codices, the 13th c. Parisinus Suppl. gr. 1021 (Garnier-Maran's Coislinianus secundus). These three MSS are of the A branch in the classification of Bessières. Thirdly, Amand states that Garnier-Maran give occasional variants from the unimportant 16th c. Berolinensis gr. 23 (a MS loaned by the librarian of Clermont) and from the equally late Parisinus Suppl. gr. 334; it is doubtful if either was collated in its entirety. With the latter pair should also be ranged the 13th c. Vaticanus gr. 434; its readings appear more frequently, but they were obtained by friends of dom de Montfaucon and cannot be accepted with anything like assurance. The last two MSS are assigned by Bessières to his Aa grouping, the branch and family which represents the most primitive and valuable MS tradition.[1] The

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[1] Both the Aa order of the letters and therefore the Aa form of the text are the most original: this correlation is Bessières' thesis.

Berolinensis gr. 23 on the other hand is classed as Bz. But whereas Bessières maintains that this group is the most ancient representative of the B line of transmission, Turner is convinced that it is the other way around: Bz stands not at the beginning but at the end of a long line of development. To this basic triarchy of nine MSS the elenchus adds mention of some eighteen secondary codices, almost all of them Regii, containing from one to thirty-three letters. Confining ourselves solely to the corpora, i. e., the general or "complete" collections, we find that there were seven MSS of this kind available to Garnier in Paris, ranging in date from the 10th to the 16th c. Six were collated by/for him, the one that was ignored--the Regius 2897, 2 = the present-day Parisinus gr. 971[1]--being one of the two latest. This leaves out of account (as does Bessières) the 15th c. Parisinus gr. 970, which offers a large choice of letters but not a general collection. On the whole, Amand bends over backward in sympathetic evaluation

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In this category of Basil's writings could not further variety and confusion in the matter of sigla be avoided by the simple as well as useful expedient of employing the branch and family designations of Bessières, plus a number to indicate the specific MS in each family? The MSS could be numbered in the order in which they appear in Bessières' list (op. cit., reprint, pp. 21f.), or, perhaps more helpfully, according to age, beginning with the earliest. Thus on the latter basis the Vaticanus 434 (= Vaticanus of the Benedictines, V of Cavallin) would be Aa_6, the Parisinus gr. Sup. 763 (Deferrari's B, Cavallin's N) would be Ab_2, the Parisinus Cois. 237 (the Benedictines' Coisl. primus, Deferrari's and Cavallin's E) would be Bo_3. The siglum would then not only serve as an identification but would be qualitatively significant. Such a system of notation could be extended to the other categories of writings, with adjustments for cases in which the same MS may be found to figure in more than one corpus. As the MSS of the remaining categories are reduced to branches and families, each MS would take the applicable upper- and lower-case letters plus a number to identify the particular codex in each branch-family.

[1] Inasmuch as he twice points out the error of Bessières in identifying the Regius 2897 with the Parisinus gr. 971 (instead of 967), Amand's citation of "971" at mid-page 145 when he obviously means "967" is a confusing misprint.

of this phase of the Ben. ed. "... It represents all the varieties of the manuscript tradition of the correspondence, for the Parisian manuscripts belong to all the families of the branches A and B (except Bz[1])... . However the preponderance which the edition certainly accords to the manuscripts of branch B is to be regretted." Cavallin is more discerning and incisive. He feels that the Maurists have given altogether too much weight to their three primary (branch B) MSS. While in the pre-Benedictine editions MSS of the A branch are used chiefly, they are accorded a comparatively slight place by Garnier-Maran.[2] Turner's analysis is likewise more penetrating and less favorable than Amand's. The English scholar notes that "no one of the older manuscripts of the older family"Aa was used.[3] As a matter of fact the two Aa MSS which were used belong to the three latest of the eight codices in this group; moreover the unsatisfactory manner in which they seem to have been employed has already been pointed out.

... The only Aa MS at Paris is of the sixteenth century, so that it is not surprising that the Benedictine edition does not reproduce the Aa text. If M. Bessières is, as we fully believe, right in assigning the superiority to this family over all the rest, it is at once obvious that, from the point of view of the readings adopted, a new critical edition might in detail differ rather widely from the Benedictine.[4]

Turner further records it as his conviction that "any future editor of St Basil's letters will lose nothing by confining his attention to the MSS of the tenth, eleventh, and twelfth centuries."[5] Among the nine MSS of the

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[1] True; but should it not be added for the record that though one existed in Paris, no Bu MS was used either?

[2] A. Cavallin, Studien zu den Briefen des hl. Basilius, p. 19.

[3] C. H. Turner in Bessières, op. cit., reprint, p. iv.

[4] Ibid., p. 3.

[5] Ibid., p. 106.

corpora of Basil's letters employed by the Maurists, only four are 11th c., and all are B; the rest date from the 13th c. or later. Weighed in such balances as these, the Maurist text of the correspondence is decidedly wanting, a judgment which may be said to obtain for the Ben. ed. as a whole.

For while Garnier secured for his edition a MS basis that was "solid and very extensive" (to quote Amand),[1] his was far from being a critical work according to modern standards. He was too much beholden to previous editions for this to be the case. By and large his publication was less in the nature of a new edition than a revision of the 1618 Greek-Latin and of the earlier works on which it was based. Garnier himself leaves no doubt of this. In the Preface to Vol. I he acknowledges his dependence upon his predecessors.[2] He asserts that in establishing his text he had the pioneer edition of 1532 before him constantly and that he obtained from it many variants which he has indicated in his critical notes, though he cites this edition less frequently than the Greek-Latin of 1618. The text of the Maurists thus conforms to the rule that the Frobenian editio princeps of 1532 became the foundation, nearly unchanged, of subsequent editions.

All the editors--and dom Garnier was no exception--reproduced the text of Erasmus which they "emended" in some places by means of conjecture. The Maurist editor alone introduced what were after all very cautious modifications borrowed from manuscripts of different textual tradition where he suspected that the reading of the editi was faulty.[3]

Garnier likewise held the complementary Venetian edition of 1535 in high

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[1] "Essai d'une histoire critique des éditions générales ...," Rev. bén., LVI, 129.

[2] Pars. 6ff., pp. ivff.

[3] D. Amand, "Essai d'une histoire critique ...," Rev. bén., LII, 148.

regard. He states that he availed himself of it like a MS and that he has collected in his critical notes all its variants.[1] In the case of the Ascetica, of which the Venetian of 1535 was the editio princeps, he cites this edition as frequently as the second Frobenian of 1551 and the Parisian Greek-Latin of 1618. But it is on the 1618 edition that he may be said to have placed chief reliance.[2] Thus for the text of the Letters the Maurists started with the Parisian edition and emended it with the aid of MSS listed in the elenchus of Vol. III. In fact, the paragraph with which Bessières climaxes his summary of the printed editions of Basil's letters is an admirable commentary upon the editorial development of the Basilian writings as a whole.

> This dry and rapid review ... teaches us that there has been created from the text of this correspondence a sort of printed tradition, the editions complementing one another and also being complemented by each other. Thus, that of Basle, 1532, rests upon that of Grossenhain and upon the Aldine,[3] which it includes; that of 1551 completes in its turn the preceding by adjoining to it the supplement produced at Venice in 1535 on the part of de Sabio. The Parisian edition of 1618 has for its base the Frobenian of 1551, which it in turn completes with the aid of writings appearing elsewhere or as yet unpublished. The Benedictine edition in turn depends upon that of 1618, which it enriches with the letters published by Cotelier. It is a remarkable fact that dom Maran, having at his disposal the Harleianus, did not think of obtaining directly from it Letters 361, 362, 363, and 364. He goes to seek them in Cotelier who himself had copied them from the Harleianus.[4] Thus we see how the printed corpus formed itself little by

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[1] Ben. ed., Vol. I, Preface, par. 6, p. iv.

[2] The 1618 and the Benedictine are the two pivotal editions in the printed tradition.

[3] This was a special epistolary edition published in 1499 by the Venetian humanist Aldus which included Eps. CCCXXXV-CCCLVI and an equal number--twenty-two--scattered about in the present-day classification of Maran. Grossenhain was the German town in which the theologian Vincent Obsopoeus published an anthology of an almost equal number of the letters of Basil (fifty-nine letters) and Gregory (fifty-eight).

[4] The fact is the more remarkable in that de Harlay had given this very MS (now the Parisinus Suppl. gr. 1020, 11th c.) to Garnier and through him to the library of St. Germain (Amand, Rev. bén., LVI, 128, 143).

little, and from what intermediate sources the items in the final edition come. This does not mean that the later editors did not refer directly to the manuscripts. But no one ever completely begins over again. Account is always taken of the existing editions.[1]

A more important deficiency, especially from the standpoint of the present-day technique of editing, relates to the consideration that although Garnier used a well-trained mind and a highly-gifted judgment in his work, the text he established appears to have been arrived at in an eclectic, mechanical fashion. No apparent concern was given in the case of each corpus to the filiation or geneological pattern of its MS tradition and to the tracing of the various branches and families among the MSS. It seems that the latter were considered by and large as being on a par and that their qualitative aspect was overlooked. Thus one of the primary canons of scientific textual criticism was ignored. It could hardly have been otherwise in the nature of the case. The importance of classifying and weighing MSS instead of merely counting them was still a long way from being realized, at least in the patristic field. To be sure, for the Basilian writings it was only as recently as the First World War that a beginning was made by Bessières in the scientific treatment of the textual tradition.

To sum up, then, "the editor or rather the future editors [of Basil] must base their critical text upon the whole of the ancient manuscripts preserved in the libraries of Europe and the Orient, and distinguish exactly the various families of particular manuscript traditions proper to each corpus--Hexaemeron, Homilies, Ascetica, Letters."[2] This difficult and complex task is made the more overwhelming by the quantity and dispersion of

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[1] Bessières, op. cit., reprint, pp. 19f.

[2] Amand, "Essai d'une histoire critique ...," Rev. bén., LVI, 149.

the MSS. Hundreds of them containing Basilian along with other writings have come down to us, and they are widely scattered throughout the Orient, Greece, Russia, central Europe, Italy, Spain, Great Britain, etc. As to date, none of the known MSS seems to be older than the 9th or 9th/10th c. with two exceptions, a page of a fine codex reproducing the beginning of Homily II on the Hexaemeron,[1] and three double leaves or a dozen pages from a 5th c. papyrus codex which have preserved bits of Eps. V, VI, CCXCIII, CL, and II.[2] The MSS range downward in date to the 16th c., when the MS tradition gives way to the printed.

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[1] De Ghellinck, Patristique ..., II, 321f.

[2] Berliner Klassikertexte, 1910; No. P. 6795: cf. Cavallin, op. cit., pp. 12ff., and Bessières, op. cit., reprint, pp. 124-7. According to de Ghellinck, op. cit., II, 322, this anthological scrap is especially important because it definitely confirms the two embranchement thesis of Bessières; but cf. Turner in Bessières, op. cit., reprint, p. 5.

ABSTRACT - SUMMARY

(I)[1] Basil the Great of Caesarea (329/30-379), the only Father of the Eastern church to whom the title "Great" has been given, presents a remarkable instance of the struggle between a profoundly religious "heredity" and an equally thoroughgoing secular educational "environment." Coming out of an ancestry of virile Christian piety and a home in which he was nurtured on the teachings of Origen mediated through Gregory Thaumaturgus, he spent many of his formative years under the best rhetors and sophists of the day in Constantinople and Athens. (II) This tension between Christianity and classicism was resolved in his late twenties, when he renounced wealth, position, and worldly wisdom (at least outwardly), and withdrew to an ascetic life. The outstanding feature of the monastic asceticism which he was soon practicing and propagating was its bibliocentricity. The Bible was the regula par excellence, the rule by which he rigidly fashioned his own life and the monastic system for which he is celebrated.

(III) Henceforward Basil's conviction of the absolute sufficiency and finality of Scripture dominated him. Nowhere is it better exhibited than in his gift for turning Scripture to practical account in all-inclusive regulation of the life of the Christian, who is pre-eminently the monk. Both his theory and his practice are instinct with the unique superiority of Holy Writ to anything that secular culture can offer. To Basil the

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[1] Roman numerals indicate chapters in the dissertation.

issue presents itself as "foolish wisdom" vs. "the oracles of the Spirit." The Word of God mediated to the believer by the Spirit is infallible revelation; the faith which enshrines this revelation is the highest wisdom; and before such wisdom reason itself must bow.

(IV) For the Scriptures are theopneustos; it is this divine inspiration which gives them their incontestable authority. Basil's concept of authorship and the divine afflatus is conspicuous for its sanity; nor is the illapse of the Spirit less essential to the understanding of the Scriptures than to their authorship. Thus it is that Basil ventures the bold step of making the Bible interpreted by the Spirit-filled conscience of the believer the ultimate seat of authority. Prophecy, while vehemently contrasted with divination, is largely conceived of as prediction; the Psalms especially abound in messianic allusions. As a consequence of its equal inspiration throughout, a fundamental unity and harmony pervade Scripture, though Basil exhibits a keen awareness of the superiority of the gospel to the Law and has his decided preferences among the books.

(V) Basil is a biblicist rather than a traditionalist. Although in theory tradition has the same force as Scripture for him, actually his use of the written revelation dwarfs his resort to the unwritten. But while the accent is heavily on Scripture, he is concerned that the ancient heritage be preserved inviolate no less in its traditional than in its scriptural formulation. He is the avowed enemy of novelty: thus his quarrel with Eunomius is largely a matter of the latter's refusal to honor scriptural-traditional terminology and of his proclivity to innovate instead.

(VI) From both the scholarly and the edificatory standpoints Basil's exegetical consciousness is of a high order. He combines a lexical and

grammatical regard for Scripture with an appreciation of its formal and stylistic side, and is given to probing the context to discover the thread of meaning or argument. It is along these lines that he arrives at a mode of interpretation which is primarily literal-practical. In his concern for the historical setting and in his forthright disavowal of allegory, he is one of the brightest of the morningstars of the exegetical Reformation which the work of the Antiochian school constitutes. This is true despite the fact that Basil could no more completely sever himself from the spell of allegory than he was able to disown his classical education. But if he goes to any extreme it is in the direction of literalism, although he overly "spiritualizes" the Psalms in particular. His resort to the Greek version of the OT virtually as if it were the original not infrequently leads him astray. While he conforms to the age in this bondage to the Greek, he often ventures resourceful interpretations and insights of his own: this however is usually done in a more or less restrained manner.

(VII) Basil's concern with matters of canon is incidental. He quotes almost all the deuterocanonical writings of the OT without apology, though by no means as often or as significantly as the protocanonical. In the NT, Hebrews is attributed to Paul, the Apocalypse to the evangelist John, while in the case of the catholic epistles Basil shared the attitude of the East in its suspicion of all but Jas., I Pet., and I Jn. As for the biblical text reflected in the writings of Basil, the Benedictine ed. of 1721-30, which is the vulgate, is unfitted to be an instrument of research where the minutiae of letters and syllables is involved. And modern critical work on the Basilian text has been relatively negligible. However, the next few months to four years will see scientific editions of almost the whole of

the undisputed Basilian corpus. Even then the human factors in patristic quotations make the formula with which we have to deal in biblical-text investigation an extremely complex and delicate one.

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[Note: Succeeding titles preceded by a "B" have more or less helpful bibliographical material on Basil.]

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Abstract of

BASIL OF CAESAREA AND THE BIBLE

a Ph.D. dissertation submitted by William Arthur Tieck, 1953
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(I)[1] Basil the Great of Caesarea (329/30-379) presents a remarkable instance of the struggle between a profoundly religious "heredity" and an equally thoroughgoing secular educational "environment." Coming out of an ancestry of virile Christian piety and a home in which he was nurtured on the teachings of Origen mediated through Gregory Thaumaturgus, he spent many of his formative years under the best rhetors and sophists of the day in Constantinople and Athens. (II) This tension between Christianity and classicism was resolved in his late twenties, when he renounced wealth, position, and worldly wisdom (at least outwardly), and withdrew to an ascetic life. The outstanding feature of the monastic asceticism which he was soon practicing and propagating was its bibliocentricity. The Bible was the <u>regula</u> par excellence, the rule by which he rigidly fashioned his own life and the monastic system for which he is celebrated.

(III) Henceforward Basil's conviction of the absolute sufficiency and finality of Scripture dominated him. Both his theory and his practice are instinct with the unique superiority of Holy Writ to anything that secular culture can offer. To Basil the issue presents itself as "foolish wisdom" vs. "the oracles of the Spirit." The Word of God mediated to the believer by the Spirit is infallible revelation; the faith which enshrines this revelation is the highest wisdom; and before such wisdom reason itself

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[1] Roman numerals indicate chapters in the dissertation.

must bow.

(IV) For the Scriptures are theopneustos; it is this divine inspiration which gives them their incontestable authority. Basil's concept of authorship and the divine afflatus is conspicuous for its sanity; nor is the illapse of the Spirit less essential to the understanding of the Scriptures than to their authorship. Thus it is that Basil ventures the bold step of making the Bible interpreted by the Spirit-filled conscience of the believer the ultimate seat of authority. Prophecy, while vehemently contrasted with divination, is largely conceived of as prediction; the Psalms especially abound in messianic allusions. As a consequence of its equal inspiration throughout, a fundamental unity and harmony pervade Scripture, though Basil exhibits a keen awareness of the superiority of the gospel to the Law and has his decided preferences among the books.

(V) Basil is a biblicist rather than a traditionalist. Although in theory tradition has the same force as Scripture for him, actually his use of the written revelation dwarfs his resort to the unwritten. But while the accent is heavily on Scripture, he is concerned that the ancient heritage be preserved inviolate no less in its traditional than in its scriptural formulation. He is the avowed enemy of novelty: thus his quarrel with Eunomius is largely a matter of the latter's refusal to honor scriptural-traditional terminology and of his proclivity to innovate instead.

(VI) From both the scholarly and the edificatory standpoints Basil's exegetical consciousness is of a high order. He combines a lexical and grammatical regard for Scripture with an appreciation of its formal and stylistic side, and is given to probing the context to discover the thread of meaning or argument. It is along these lines that he arrives at a mode

of interpretation which is primarily literal-practical. In his concern for the historical setting and in his forthright disavowal of allegory, he is one of the brightest of the morningstars of the exegetical Reformation which the work of the Antiochian school constitutes. This is true despite the fact that Basil could no more completely sever himself from the spell of allegory than he was able to disown his classical education. But if he goes to any extreme it is in the direction of literalism, although he overly "spiritualizes" the Psalms in particular. His resort to the Greek version of the OT virtually as if it were the original not infrequently leads him astray. While he conforms to the age in this bondage to the Greek, he often ventures resourceful interpretations and insights of his own: this however is usually done in a more or less restrained manner.

(VII) Basil's concern with matters of canon is incidental. He quotes almost all the deuterocanonical writings of the OT without apology, though by no means as often or as significantly as the protocanonical. In the NT, Hebrews is attributed to Paul, the Apocalypse to the evangelist John, while in the case of the catholic epistles Basil shared the attitude of the East in its suspicion of all but Jas., I Pet., and I Jn. As for the biblical text reflected in the writings of Basil, the Benedictine ed. of 1721-30, which is the vulgate, is unfitted to be an instrument of research where the minutiae of letters and syllables is involved. And modern critical work on the Basilian text has been relatively negligible. However, the next few months to four years will see scientific editions of almost the whole of the undisputed Basilian corpus. Even then the human factors in patristic quotations make the formula with which we have to deal in biblical-text investigation an extremely complex and delicate one.